

PORTABLE TECHNOLOGY-BASED MICRO CHURCHES: A MULTIPLICATION  
MODEL FOR THE GREATER NEW YORK CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTISTS

By

MANUEL ANTONIO ROSARIO SÁNCHEZ

A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Submitted to  
New York Theological Seminary  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

New York, New York, USA

2021

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## ABSTRACT

### PORTABLE TECHNOLOGY-BASED MICRO CHURCHES: A MULTIPLICATION MODEL FOR THE GREATER NEW YORK CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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The challenge statement of this dissertation reads as follow:

I am the Personal Ministries Director and Chairman of the Evangelism Committee of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Like most Christian denominations, we lost the culture of planting new churches, which was always part of our ethos. Statistics show that 96% of churches in America do not multiply, mostly because they lack vision and leadership. This demonstration project designed a portable technology-based church planting multiplication model that trains the leaders to grow and reproduce their churches.

The researcher answered the following questions:

How does the Great Commission relate to church planting? 2) Are the biblical concepts of church and mission malleable enough to include the on-line worship gathering? 3) How do living generations embrace spirituality and church attendance? And 4) What has been the church planting methodology's historical impact on the Seventh-day Adventist church's growth? In the meantime, the following empirical queries were answered: 1) What is the level of participation of the pastors and lay-leaders in the Church Planting Movement? 2) What are the constituents' attitudes toward on-line church planting? 3) How vibrant is the SDA missionary culture among the pastors and parishioners? 4) How strong is the spiritual health of the future planters?

The pollster applied a survey with 29 questions designed with SurveyMonkey, an online survey development cloud-based software. The researcher obtained a 95% of confidence ( $Z = 1.96$ ) and an estimated error of  $\pm 5\%$  (0.05) with a fair variability of  $p = .7$ , which for the referred population ( $N = 33,000$ ), yielded a sample of 320 cases. The collection lasted two weeks, and then the pollster processed the data with the IBM-SPSS Statistical Package.

This dissertation is dedicated to the missionary par excellence Jesus Christ, who left His throne to plant His church on our planet. It also credits all the church planters in New York and worldwide.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Jazmín Rosario, my beloved wife, a special gift from God.

To Carlos and Carolin, who have taught me to be a father.

To Antonio Rosario, my father, who will always live in my heart.

To Esperanza Sánchez, a real mother.

To my brothers Rafael, Oscar, Marisol, and Juan Carlos, the world's best siblings.

To the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for sponsoring me.

To the New York Theological Seminary for accepting me into their distinguished program.

To my professors, Rev. Dr. C. Vernon Mason, Rev. Dr. Wanda M. Lundy, Rev. Dr. Rafael Reyes III, Rev. Dr. Keith Russell, for their exceptional insights and wisdom.

To my professor and advisor, Dr. Nicardo Delahaye, for his guidance and discernment.

To my site Team members, Dr. Steve Cassimy, Dr. Samuel Peguero Colón, and Pr. Herode Thomas, MDiv., for their inspiration and prayers.

To my editors in English and Spanish, Henrique González and Sarat Arias, for their outstanding service.

To my cohort members, master group members, colleagues, friends, and the NYTS family for their love along the way.

To all the church planters of the Greater New York Conference, for embracing the vision of multiplication.

## PREFACE

*"So, the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers" Acts 16:5*

The correlation between the great commission and church planting is stunning. Luke reminds us that the Lord integrated the new disciples into communities called churches. It is written: "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day... And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:41,47).

It is also interesting that the Book of Acts is permeated with a culture of multiplication. Disciples, leaders, finances, and churches multiplied. Two times the beloved physician specifically declares that the churches (ἐκκλησία) grew and multiplied. (Acts 9:31, 16:5). These dynamic micro churches, meeting in houses (Romans 16:3,5) and guided by the Holy Spirit, kept reproducing without temples or complicated structures.

Clifton Clint, in his book *Church Planting Thresholds*, points out that churches make disciples and disciples make churches and that the most critical and necessary resource is a truly willing leader.<sup>1</sup>

He asserts that the American churches have been so busy doing the ministry that they have neglected the mission. Then he quotes: "Our greatest potential for the growth of the Kingdom is found in the local churches, whose elders and members dedicate themselves to train and send members to plant new churches in the communities that need them."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Clifton Clint, *Church Planting Thresholds: A Gospel-Centered Guide* (Middletown, DE: New City Network, 2016) xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Clint, *Church Planting Thresholds*, xix.

I think he is right! Ellen G. White once stated: "Upon all who believe, God has placed the burden of raising churches."<sup>3</sup> However, we wonder. Can we plant churches during the pandemic? What about after the pandemic? The answer to both questions is yes!

As Thom S. Rainer rightly refers to, the blessing is that during the Covid 19 pandemic, many church members and leaders discovered that the church was still the church even without the facilities. It proves once again that church planting is more than starting new church services. It is about mission; it is about reaching people where they are, including social media platforms. "Indeed, the digital world opened up possibilities that many congregations had never considered, much less tried."<sup>4</sup>

Yes, we must plant all kinds of churches, including online, as long as they keep faithful to the Biblical truth. It is probably the time to adapt to the old proverb<sup>5</sup> and declare: "If the people do not come to the church, the church will go to the people."

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<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, "*Ministry to the Cities*" (Doral, Florida: IADPA, 2012) 130.

<sup>4</sup> Rainer, *The Post-Quarantine Church*, 17.

<sup>5</sup> "If the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the hill." Francis Bacon.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING**

#### **Reflection upon the Ministry**

The Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GNYC) was established on January 1, 1902, to proclaim the good news of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

The GNYC is committed to providing its members with high-quality ministries by assuming the inalienable commitment to prepare a people for the soon second coming of Christ. Adventists believe in the importance of discipleship as a constant of personal growth. The Adventist legacy is vast as they are known worldwide for their family care, educational and health systems, and a vigorous youth movement, among other aspects of great relevance.

The GNYC has a very active Family Ministry led by experts in family life, which has certified with Andrews University, the flagship educational Institution of the SDA church, more than 100 family couches in the last four years. It also operates 8 Schools and one Academy in which hundreds of students, Adventists, and non-Adventists are educated.

Like all other Conferences, the GNYC has a vibrant Youth Ministry that leads thousands of children and youth organized as Adventurers, Pathfinders, and Master

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<sup>6</sup> Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Working Policy Handbook, p.2.

Guides. Its Community Service (CS) runs the Van Ministry, which provides education on healthy food, relaxation massages, and much more. The Conference also operates more than 33 food pantries, which serve everybody without interruptions and exceptions. The ACS runs the Shower of Blessings and a Van, highly equipped to provide free baths to homeless people in the city.

### **Reflection upon the Mission**

Adventists are mission-driven, which makes all their Ministries in full harmony with their vision. Their task is the Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20. GNYC constituents are so committed to the mission that only in 2019, more than 28 million dollars were given as a tithe to support it.

The Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists' mission statement declares: "Making disciples by touching hearts and changing lives with the everlasting gospel." <sup>7</sup>

Also essential in their vision of mission is Revelation 14: 6-12, which features three angels flying in heaven with the everlasting gospel to be preached worldwide. Adventists see themselves as these angels. It gives their mission a sense of worldwide imperative.

As part of their missionary arsenal, Adventists promote small groups / Sabbath School discipleship units, community service, evangelistic programs, church planting, printing press, radio, television, social media, and much more. The GNYC has a powerful evangelistic literature program, with dozens of canvassers distributing them from house

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<sup>7</sup> Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Strategic Planning 2019-2022, Greater New York, p. 6.



to house. It also has an Adventist Book Center (ABC) in its headquarters in Manhasset, Long Island.

It is essential to say that the SDA church operates more than 60 printing houses worldwide. With great wisdom, Ellen G. White also said:

Small tracts on the different points of Bible truth applicable to the present time should be printed in different languages and scattered where there is any probability that they would be read. God has placed at the command of His people advantages in the press, which, combined with other agencies, will be successful in extending the knowledge of the truth. Tracts, papers, and books, as the case demands, should be circulated in all the cities and villages in the land. Here is missionary work for all to engage in.<sup>8</sup>

In 2014 the GNYC rekindled a powerful church planting movement. The vision driving that movement is: "Every disciple, making a disciple and every church planting a church." Since then, over fifty 50 new churches have been planted. The idea now is to consolidate and expand that vision in a more aggressive portable technology-based model.

### **Reflection upon the Spirituality**

Adventists take the issue of spirituality very seriously. In 1853, only a few years after the first group of Sabbath-keeping Adventists was formed in Washington, New Hampshire, James White organized the first regular Sabbath School in Rochester, New York. Since then, the Sabbath School has established itself as the leading promoter of spirituality and the SDA church's leading non-formal educational system.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ellen Gould White, "Counsels on Health and Instruction to Medical Missionary Workers" (Mountain View: CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1923), 466.2.

<sup>9</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Church Sabbath School" SDA, Accessed on June 14, 2020, <https://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/sabbathschool>.

From its inception, Sabbath School has focused on four emphases that are still prominent to this day: fellowship development, community outreach, Bible study, and foreign mission. A stable balance of these elements characterizes the most vital Sabbath Schools around the world. Through the Sabbath School, the church provides worldwide quarterly studies of the Bible.

The main pillars that support Adventist spirituality are the study of the Bible, prayer, the worship services, and the reading of Ellen G. White's books, which they consider a Lord's prophet. Adventists also support all other spiritual disciplines with a scriptural foundation such as fasting and the return of tithe and offerings. They also believe a healthy devotional life is directly proportional to church growth.

According to Christian Schwartz, Director of Natural Church Development (NCD), who did worldwide research on the essential characteristics of growing churches, passionate spirituality is one of the eight basics qualities of growing churches.

Christian Schwarz has studied more than 70000 congregations worldwide and identified eight essential elements in healthy churches. He emphasizes that God's church will grow naturally if it is functioning healthily. The church staff's job is to be aware of the crucial areas, which, if not performing well, will tend to block healthy church development.<sup>10</sup>

In North America, the SDA church has the legal right to apply the NCD surveys and has done so in hundreds of its churches. According to Russel Burrill and Tom L. Evans, in their books *Creating Healthy Adventist Churches through Natural Church*

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<sup>10</sup> Christian Schwartz "Natural Church Development" NCD, Accessed June 14, 2020, <http://www.ncd-international.org/public/?jsessionid=8D496DCFE3045FB21A9A061499A6665B>.

Development, in the churches using the NCD Survey, passionate spirituality appears near the top in the Adventist experience. It is our second highest characteristic, averaging 54.3. (the ideal factor is 65).

Two questions from this category score in the top 10 out of the entire survey: "I enjoy reading the Bible on my own (average of 66%), and the Bible is a powerful guide for me in the decision of everyday life (average of 62). This exceptional result indicates that Adventists are people of the Book."<sup>11</sup>

### **Reflection upon the Identity**

The Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and all of its constituents are part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's worldwide organization, organized in the USA on May 21, 1863. Among SDA founders are Joseph Bates, James White, Ellen G. White, and John N. Andrews.

As of December 31, 2018, the Summary of Statistics reported 88,718 Churches, 72,843 Companies, and 21,414,779 members worldwide. The SDA church is organized in 13 Divisions around the world, divided into Unions, which are, in turn, subdivided into local Conferences.

The Greater New York Conference, at the same time, is part of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists and the Atlantic Union of Seventh-day Adventists. The Atlantic Union is the Headquarter for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, serving the Northeast United States and Bermuda Islands.

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<sup>11</sup> Russell Burrill and Tom L. Evans, *Creating Healthy Adventist Churches through Natural Church Development* (Berrien Spring, Michigan: College Press, 2014), 43,44.

The Greater New York Conference of SDA church serves over 31 thousand members that worship in more than 25 languages in over 200 churches, companies, and mission groups. The congregations are organized in five ministries: Hispanic, English, Multiethnic, Franco-Haitian, and Korean. Since its organization on January 1, 1902, the GNYC has covered the following geographical areas: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk counties), Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and Upstate (Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putman, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester counties.) Please glance at the SDA church in figures in appendix B.<sup>12</sup>

### **Reflection upon the Programs**

According to the working policy, "the objective of all the programs and activities of Conference departments is to spread the gospel of Jesus and to hasten the day of his coming." <sup>13</sup>

To serve better the constituents, the GNYC is organized as follows: An executive committee, authorized by the quadrennial sessions, has full authority to act on behalf of the Institution. Three Administrative Officers: President, Executive Secretary, and Treasurer give administrative leadership, and five Ethnic Ministries Coordinators help to advance the mission among the local churches.

The following Departmental Directors provide leadership to the various following programs: Personal Ministries, Sabbath School, Disability Ministries, Prison Ministries, Family Ministries, Youth Ministries, Children Ministries, Women Ministries, Men

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.adventist.org/articles/seventh-day-adventist-world-church-statistics-2018/>

<sup>13</sup> Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Working Policy Handbook, p.3.

Ministries, Prayer Ministries, Publishing Ministries, Stewardship, Education, Communication, Community Services, Religious Liberty and Trust Services.

The Office is open Monday to Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and in wintertime from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The leading worship service is Saturdays. Members and visitors gather to review the quarterly Sabbath School Lessons that the church provides in a print version and online. Then follows divine worship. Adventists usually eat lunch at the temple and use the afternoon for community service, youth counseling, family life, Christians' finances.

### **Reflection upon the Ethos**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church voices its official teachings in a formal statement known as the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. In many of these, the SDA step on common ground with other Christian denominations. SDA believes in salvation by faith in Jesus only. They also believe in the trinity and many other biblical doctrines.

There are few teachings held exclusively by Seventh-day Adventists. Some of their views that differ from most Christian churches include the perpetuity of the seventh-day Sabbath, the unconsciousness of man in death, conditional immortality, an atoning ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and an "investigative judgment" that commenced in 1844. Furthermore, a traditionally historicist approach to prophecy has led Adventists to develop a unique system of eschatological beliefs that incorporates a commandment-keeping "remnant", a universal end-time crisis revolving around the law of God, and the visible return of Jesus Christ before a millennial reign of believers in heaven.<sup>14</sup>

Regarding the SDA values. The following value statement was approved and voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee at the Annual Council in Silver Spring, Maryland, on October 10, 2004:

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<sup>14</sup> Wikipedia, Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Accessed on June 16, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh-day\\_Adventist\\_theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh-day_Adventist_theology).

Seventh-day Adventist values are rooted in the revelation of God provided through the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ. Our sense of identity and calling grows from an understanding of Bible prophecies, especially those concerning the time immediately preceding the return of Jesus. Consequently, all of life becomes a growing experience and demonstration of involvement with God and His kingdom. Our sense of mission is driven by the realization that every person, regardless of circumstances, is of infinite value to God and thus deserving of respect and dignity. Through God's grace, every person is gifted for and needed in the diverse activities of the church family. Our respect for diversity, individuality, and freedom is balanced by regard for the community. We are one—a worldwide family of faith engaged in representing the reign of God in our world through ethical conduct, mutual care, and loving service. Our faithfulness to God involves a commitment to and support of His body, the church.<sup>15</sup>

### **Reflection upon the Resources and Capacities**

The GNYC is a trustworthy Christian Institution whose maximum strength is its members' high Christian vocation and excellent service capacity. Adventists have a strong belief that God is the sole owner of everything and see themselves as stewards.

SDA fundamental belief No. 20 declares:

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellowmen, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness.<sup>16</sup>

The GNYC has a not-for-profit legal corporation, The Greater New York Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists, which holds title to all real states and vehicles

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<sup>15</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Values" (SDA) October 10, 2004, Accessed on June 16, 2020, <https://www.adventist.org/articles/values/>.

<sup>16</sup> We Believe: *A Brief Explanation of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church*. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2007).

belonging to the Conference. "The business of the Corporation is conducted by its Board of Trustees.

The Corporation also owns the building where the GNYC is located at seven Shelter Rock Road Manhasset, NY, 11030. It has buildings through NY State, including Camp Berkshire, which is primarily a summer facility that seats 1,600 people

## CHAPTER 2

### PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

#### Challenge Statement

I am the Personal Ministries Director and Chairman of the Evangelism Committee of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Like most Christian denominations, we lost the culture of planting new churches, which was always part of our ethos. Statistics show that 96% of churches in America do not multiply, mostly because they lack vision and leadership. This demonstration project will design a portable technology-based church planting multiplication model that trains the leaders to grow and reproduce their churches.

The Greater New York Conference of SDA was organized in 1902 in response to Ellen White's prophetic advice, and it is called to be a Conference that advances like a burning lamp. In this regard, she wrote:

"While in New York in the winter of 1901, I received light in regard to the work in that great city. Night after night, the course that our brethren should pursue passed before me. In Greater New York, the message is to go forth as a lamp that burneth... New York is ready to be worked. In that great city, the message of truth will be given with the power of God. " <sup>17</sup>

She also said that Greater New York should be a symbol of the work the Lord desires to see done in the world. I have to say that the Greater New Conference for more than 118 years has been that lamp and symbol. However, an assessment conducted in

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<sup>17</sup> Ellen G. White, *Ministry to the Cities* (México: IADPA, 2012), 143. Also, in *Testimonies for The Church* 7:54, 55 (1902).



2014 by the Personal Ministries Department revealed that the Conference had been losing one of its main missionary components: the vision of multiplication.

At that time, out of the five Ethnic Ministries that structure the Conference, three abandoned the vision of planting new churches, and only two were moving slowly. The Korean Ministry, for example, had produced its last church in 1989. Also,

both the English and the Franco-Haitian Ministries had planted their previous churches more than ten years ago. Only the Multiethnic and the Spanish Ministries were barely growing.

It is honest to say that this missionary drop has been systematic and general. Dr. Russel Burrill, emeritus professor of Church Growth and Evangelism at Andrews University and former Director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute, comments:

In the 1870s, a new church was planted each year for every two ordained ministers. This was sustained for all ten years of the decade. In the 1880s, the rate was for every five or six ordained ministers, and in the 1890s, one new church was established every year for every four ordained ministers. Today in the first half of the 1990s, more than one hundred and twenty pastors are required to raise one church each year in North America. If modern Adventist pastors were to plant churches at the same rate as their forefathers, North America today would be planting 1,882 churches a year by the 1870s rate...; or 768 a year by the rate of the 1890s, instead of in the first half of the 1990s, North American Adventists had only 25 to 30 new starts.<sup>18</sup>

It is clear that more than a local problem, it is a universal problem. Actually, in the mid-nineties, the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists was losing churches instead of planting churches. It is also correct to say that the problem

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<sup>18</sup> Russell Burrill, *Rekindling a Lost Passion*, (Fallbrook, California: Hart Research Center, 1999), 53.

transcends Adventism. It is a problem of the Christian church in the United States and beyond.

I have to be honest; significant efforts have been made during the last few years to change the picture. EXPONENTIAL, the leading event for church planters in North America, has done an invaluable job in awareness, inspiration, and training. However, a phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors conducted by LifeWay Research Jan. 14 – 30, 2019, with a sample of 95% confidence and a sampling error of 3.2%, affirms that the problem is still far to be resolved. Please pay careful attention to the facts:

LifeWay Research found that 6 in 10 Protestant churches are plateaued or declining in attendance. In 2018, few churches added new multi-site campuses (3%) or were involved in some form of planting (32%). Sixty-eight percent say they had no involvement in church planting. Around 1 in 10 (10%) say they were directly or substantially involved in opening a new church, including 7% who were a primary financial sponsor or providing ongoing support to a church plant.<sup>19</sup>

Please note that out of the 12% directly involved in opening a new church in 2018, 7% were primarily financial sponsors. As incredible as sponsoring is. The fact is that only 5 percent were on the front-line planting! In the North American Division of SDA (NAD), after launching the SEEDs program in 1996 and the Plant1000 initiative in 2016, the results are lovely but still tiny.

As of December 2019, the Secretary's Statistical Report of the NAD recounted 5,621 churches and 880 companies for 6,501; previously, as of December 2015, they had already reported 5,483 churches and 845 companies for a total of 6,328.

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<sup>19</sup> Aaron Earls, "Small, Struggling Congregations Fill U.S. Church Landscape" LifeWay Research, March 6, 2019, Accessed June 15, 2020, <https://lifewayresearch.com/2019/03/06/small-struggling-congregations-fill-u-s-church-landscape/>.

Comparing 2015 with 2019, the NAD evidence a net growth of 173 churches and companies, corroborating an official increase of 2.66% in the quinquennium. It does not include the mission groups, which add around 700 hundred more congregations. In that case, the growth would be about 13%. It implies a multiplication rate of 2.7 per year. We could accurately say that less than 3% of the NAD churches are multiplying.

In the Greater New York Conference, we are doing better, to God be the glory! According to the Secretariat, as of December 2015, we had 154 churches and 18 companies totaling 172; however, as of December 2019, they reported 160 churches and 33 companies totaling 193. It is 21 more, showing an increase of 12.20% in five years ( $21 \times 100 / 172$ ). It does not include the mission groups, which add another 30, for a total multiplication rate of 29.65% ( $52 \times 100 / 172$ ) for the quinquennial and 6% per year.

Our challenge now as Greater New York Conference is first, consolidate the desired culture of multiplication, turning the pilot plant into a real, sustainable, cost-effective, and easy to follow model, and second, provide the facts to motivate the 70% of our churches still not involved in planting.

This study aims to create a portable technology-based church planting multiplication model that trains the leaders to grow and reproduce their churches. The three principal goals are:

1. Raise awareness on the urgency to rekindle the culture of planting new churches as a critical evangelistic method to reach new people for God's kingdom.
2. Appoint a master group of 10-12 people, including pastors and lay church planters, to help me design, implement, and evaluate the project. The

group should include at least one computer engineer as a technological advisor.

3. Design a portable technology-based church planting multiplication model that facilitates a cost-effective reproduction process to be piloted across the new churches of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists planted between 2015-2020.

The project is limited to the churches planted from 2015 to 2019 due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Also, the survey is limited to church planting projects funded by the GNYC.

### **Methodology and Design**

**Goal 1:** Raise awareness on the urgency to rekindle the culture of planting new churches as a critical evangelistic method to reach new people for God's kingdom.

**Strategy 1:** Develop with a master group the criteria to implement the project, starting with the awareness campaign. (July 2020)

**Strategy 2:** Distribute a digital booklet in English and Spanish to motivate the vision and promote the benefits of a micro-church multiplication system to be circulated among the board members of the new congregations planted between 2015-2020. (August 2020)

**Strategy 3:** Produce a quantitative-qualitative study targeting the spiritual, missional, and financial growth of the new churches planted in the GNYC between 2015 – 2020 to be distributed among their board members. (December 2020)

**Evaluation of Goal 1:** Design a survey to measure the attitude toward church planting of the GNYC members. The study will also estimate the spiritual and missional health of the potential planters. This task was completed in November 2020.

**Goal 2:** Appoint a master group of 8-12 people, including pastors and lay church planters, to help me design, implement, and evaluate the project. The group should include at least one computer engineer as a technological advisor.

**Strategy 1:** Develop a selection standard for the master group members. It should provide a specific skill set to implement the project. (July 2020)

**Strategy 2:** Select the master group members. Dedicate three one-hour zoom sections to design a master plan to implement the project, which includes vision, mission, values, goals, strategies, budgets, timeline, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to short-term and long-term evaluation. The plan must be based on these three pillars: why plant new churches, how to plant new churches, and what kind of churches we should grow. (August 2020)

**Strategy 3:** Expose the master group members to a weekend training with renowned SDA church planters' practitioners and EXPONENTIAL, the leading event for church planters in North America or the North American Division of SDA church planters boot camp, to help consolidate their vision. (November 2020)

**Evaluation of Goal 2:** The minutes verifying that the team has been selected and the tasks accomplished. Also, at least 80% of the TEAM

should be present at the zoom sections, and the weekend training and not less than 75% should assist to Exponential, or the NAD church planters boot camp.

**Goal 3:** Design a portable technology-based church planting multiplication model that facilitates a cost-effective reproduction process to be piloted across the new churches of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists planted between 2015-2020.

**Strategy 1:** Appoint an ad hoc committee with pastors, experts, practitioners, and lay leaders that support the church planting movement to validate the new churches' values, structure, average size, financial system, support system, and technological spectrum designed by the master group. The meeting will be via Zoom and will last about 3 hours. (September 2020)

**Strategy 2:** Launch the GNYC online Church Planting Institute to train, for three months, in the vision of multiplication at least 25 church planting teams selected out of the new churches planted between 2015-2020. The Institute will meet twice a month for 2 hours to teach the new system. (September 2020)

**Strategy 3:** Design a Facebook page to provide resources and assist in implementing the project. (October 2020)

**Strategy 4:** Organize a church planting festival entirely dedicated to church multiplication. At least 100 leaders are expected to assist. It could

be face-to-face or virtual according to the new-normal post-COVID 19.

(December 2020)

**Evaluation:** That a minimum of 85% of the New Church Planting Institute graduates understands the three fundamental pillars of the master plan: why plant churches, how to plant churches, and what type of churches to plant. At least 70% of the teams should commit to growing a new church plant within two years from the training's conclusion.

### **CHAPTER 3**

## **THE GREAT COMMISSION AND CHURCH PLANTING**

### *Biblical – Theological Context*

#### *How does the Great Commission relate to church planting?*

The Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20 are the Christian church's marching orders; however, for many believers, it is still unclear what he meant when he said: Go and make disciples. This study advocate it essentially means to go and multiply. The early church obeyed this command by preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), baptizing those who repented (Acts 2:41), and adding them to communities of believers called churches (Acts 2:47), which in turn kept multiplying (Acts 16:5).

Some critics argue that the word missionary does not appear in the NT, to which Peyton Jones replies that it does appear since it is part of the semantic meaning of the Greek word ἀπόστολος, *apostle*, which means one that is sent. It can indeed be translated also as a missionary.<sup>20</sup> Mission comes from a Latin word *missio* that means “to send.”

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<sup>20</sup> Peyton Jones, “*Church Zero: Raising 1<sup>st</sup> Century Churches out of the Ashes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church*” (Grand Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2013), 17.



Family words are missile, transmission, commission. The great commission conveys the idea of sending together.

Jones speaks of apostles with capital letters to refer to the 12 Apostles and apostles with small letters to refer to individuals like Titus (2 Corinthians 8:23), James, the brother of Jesus (Galatians 1: 18- 19), Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Apollos (1 Corinthians 4: 6-9), Andronicus (Romans 16: 7), Junias (Romans 16: 7), Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25), Timothy (1 of Thessalonians 1: 1 - 2: 6), and Silas / Silvano (1 Thessalonians 1: 1- 2:26). They were not of the twelve, but they were also called apostles in the sense of missionaries and church planters (p. 19-20).<sup>21</sup>

These spectacular evangelists and many others not mentioned are the human heroes behind the many churches we find in the New Testament. For them, it was impossible to fulfill the great commission and not plant new churches. Paul told Titus: “For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.” (Titus 1:5). Why would they need elders in every city? Churches were planted in almost every town. There is no Great Commission apart from church planting.

As Craig and Wilson beautifully explain:

Two aspects of the Great Commission, as formulated in Matthew 28:18–20, entail church planting: the command to baptize and the command to teach obedience to all that Christ commanded. These are virtually impossible to fulfill apart from planting churches. The command to baptize reminds us that conversion includes entry into the new community of Christ. Baptism is often viewed as an individualistic event. Indeed, it is a public confession of personal repentance and faith, but beyond this, it indicates reception into the body of Christ, the new

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<sup>21</sup> Jones, *Church Zero: Raising 1<sup>st</sup> Century Churches out of the Ashes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church*, 17.

kingdom community. “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor. 12:13). Similar to proselyte baptism among the Jews, early Christian baptism indicated identification with a community—a meaning that we have largely lost today. In other words, to baptize is to enfold into a Christian community, the church.<sup>22</sup>

In the same context, the cited experts also quote scholar, Hans-Werner Gensichen, who in 1971 wrote regarding the command to baptize in Matthew 28: “Enfolding in the church is assumed as an integral part of the mission” and then comments that the only biblical example where this is not the case is the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:38–39. Furthermore, regarding the teaching component, they declare:

The command to teach obedience also assumes committed participation in the new community of Christ. Preaching the gospel and converting the lost only begin to fulfill the Great Commission. The commands of Christ cannot be kept by one individual alone, and the kingdom of Christ cannot be demonstrated in isolation. Where there are no communities of disciples, they must be created. Mission must be considered incomplete without the planting of churches among every people.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Resurrection and the Great Commission**

One of the main problems while studying the great commission is the context. Most of us tend to go straight to Matthew 28:18-20 when, in reality, the context leads us at least to verses 16-20. The Bible was not given originally in chapters and verses. Each book was written without any breaks, though we know that at least the Psalms were numbered. (Acts 13:33)

Regarding the division into chapters, Scholar Don Stewart explains:

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<sup>22</sup> Ott, Craig, and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 82.

<sup>23</sup> Ott, Craig, and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*, 82.

The divisions of individual books of Scripture into smaller sections began as early as the fourth century A.D. Codex Vaticanus, a fourth-century Greek manuscript, used paragraph divisions. These were comparable to what we find in manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible. In the fifth century, the biblical translator Jerome divided Scripture into short portions, or passages, called pericopes... The actual chapter division took place much later. A man named Stephen Langton divided the Bible into chapters in the year A.D. 1227. The Bible he used was the Latin Vulgate. Langton was a professor at the University of Paris at the time. Later, he became the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>24</sup>

Modern verse division for the New Testament was the work of the French printer Robert Stephanus. He divided the Greek text into verses for his Greek New Testament published in 1551. These divisions have indeed been a blessing for quotation purposes, but it can cause some exegetical problems.

The researcher must make sure of the context. It is vital to pay attention to grammatical nexus like conjunctions. In our passage, it is self-evident that the session starts in verse 16. It reads:

“<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (Matthew 28:16-20)

It is remarkable that the Greek word *Oi δέ* (adversative or continuative particle translated as “but”, “moreover” and “and”) connects this distinct passage with the primary account of the chapter. It is also relevant that while the NKJV translates the

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<sup>24</sup> “Why Is the Bible Divided into Chapters and Verses?” Blue Letter Bible. Accessed July 5, 2020. [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart\\_don/faq/bible-special/question8-why-is-the-bible-divided-into-chapters-and-verses.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart_don/faq/bible-special/question8-why-is-the-bible-divided-into-chapters-and-verses.cfm).

particle as “then”, the Word English Bible, The American Standard Version, and the Aramaic Bible in Plain English, translate it as “but”, highlighting its adversative element.

The whole context of Matthew 28 is Jesus’ resurrection. It is evident, as Greenway says: “Each of the four Gospels ends with a great commission after narrating the resurrection of Christ.”<sup>25</sup> There are three common elements to all four Gospels – the empty tomb, the resurrection announcement to the women, and Jesus’ meeting with his disciples.<sup>26</sup> Also, the tale right before the great commission is the guards’ false report. Matthew explains:

<sup>11</sup> Now while they were going, behold, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. <sup>12</sup> When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, <sup>13</sup> saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.’ <sup>14</sup> And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.” <sup>15</sup> So they took the money and did as they were instructed, and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. (Matthew 28:11-15)

The translation of *Oi dé* in its adversative connotation makes perfect sense since the account of the great commission is making crystal clear that the Savior was indeed resurrected. Ellen White beautifully comments:

At the sight of the angels and the glorified Savior, the Roman guard had fainted and become as dead men. When the heavenly train was hidden from their view, they arose to their feet, and as quickly as their trembling limbs could carry them, they made their way to the gate of the garden. Staggering like drunken men, they hurried on to the city, telling those whom they met the wonderful news. They were making their way to Pilate, but their report had been carried to the Jewish authorities, and the chief priests and rulers sent for them to be brought first into their presence. A strange appearance those soldiers presented. Trembling with

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51 <sup>25</sup>Roger Greenway S, “*Vayan y Hagan Discípulos!*” (Grand Rapids, MI: Libros Desafío, 2004) p.

<sup>26</sup> Leon, Morris. “*The Gospel According to Matthew*” (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013)

fear, their faces colorless; they bore testimony to the resurrection of Christ. The soldiers told all, just as they had seen it; they had not had time to think or speak anything but the truth. With painful utterance, they said, it was the Son of God who was crucified; we have heard an angel proclaiming Him as the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory.<sup>27</sup>

This great news must be given. Jesus' great commission would overpower Satan's great commission, the denial of the resurrection, with the proclamation of a risen Savior. The first commitment of the new disciples was to believe the resurrection and to proclaim it.

### **An Exegesis of the Great Commission**

In this exegetical research, I will follow the basic principles of the historical-grammatical method. This hermeneutical approach peruses the biblical authors' original intended meaning in the text. It is a development of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, John Knox, and other Protestant reformers. One key aspect of this method is the analysis of verbs and participles. Let's read Matthew 28:16-20 followed by the Greek text:

<sup>16</sup> But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had sent them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they bowed down to him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go<sup>a</sup> and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Οἱ δὲ ἑνδεκα μαθηταὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, <sup>17</sup> καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν. <sup>18</sup> καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς. <sup>19</sup> πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, **βαπτίζοντες**

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<sup>27</sup> Ellen G. White, "The Desire of Ages: The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Life of Christ" (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005) 781

<sup>28</sup> World English Bible (WEB)

αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,  
<sup>20</sup> **διδάσκοντες** αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ’  
ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. (ΜΑΘΘΑΙΟΝ  
28:16-20)<sup>29</sup>

In this text we find the subsequent participles: 1) **πορευθέντες**: Aorist Passive Deponent Participle Nominative Plural Masculine of πορεύω, go 2) **βαπτίζοντες**: Present Active Participle Nominative Plural Masculine of βαπτίζω, baptize 3) **διδάσκοντες**: Present Active Participle Nominative Plural Masculine of διδάσκω, teach; πορευθέντες is a past participle of circumstance while βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες are participles of means.<sup>30</sup>

A participle is a verbal adjective. That means that it has verbal qualities and adjectival qualities. “It has a voice and tense like a verb, but it has a gender, case, and number like an adjective. As a verb, a participle may take an object or be used as an adverbial modifier. As an adjective, it may be used in any way that a regular adjective may be used and is inflected in all three genders, in all the cases, and both numbers.”<sup>31</sup>

The first participle (πορευθέντες), however, is different from the last two. As I already mentioned, it is a participle of circumstance, preceding an imperative aorist main verb.

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<sup>29</sup> Nestle Aland Novum Testamentum Greece: Read NA28 Online. Accessed July 5, 2020.  
<https://www.nestle-aland.com/en/read-na28-online/text/bibeltext/lesen/stelle/50/280001/289999/>.

<sup>30</sup> Daniel B. Wallace and Daniel S. Steffen, “Gramática Griega: Sintaxis Del Nuevo Testamento” (Miami, FL: Vida Pub., 2015) 500

<sup>31</sup> Sunset, “Introduction to Greek Grammar”, Accessed July 5, 2020,  
<https://www.sunsetonline.org/dl/outlines/grk1/19.pdf>

Wallace refers: “Virtually all examples in the Aorist participle plus Aorist imperative include an accompanying circumstance participle.”<sup>32</sup>

The participle of circumstance takes the mode of the main verb. Matthew 2:13 is a specific example of this rule. It is written: “Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying,” Arise (Ἐγερθεῖς / Aorist Passive Participle Nominative Singular Masculine), take (παράλαβε / Second Aorist Active Imperative 2nd Person Singular) the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”

Wallace explains that the context makes clear the true meaning of the participle “arises”. It semantically acts as an imperative part of the mandate to take the Child. In the same way, πορευθέντες, should not be translated as a participle (going), but as an imperative (go), though we know, it is not.<sup>33</sup>

Another similar case is Matthew 9:13: “But go (πορευθέντες) and learn (μάθετε) what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” Here the translators follow the same principle.

In the great commission, the only verb that is actually in the imperative is μαθητεύσατε (discipleship), Aorist Active Imperative 2nd Person Plural. ‘Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations’ is a very accurate translation. The implication is that Jesus commanded the church to go as He commanded the church to make disciples.

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<sup>32</sup> Wallace, *Gramática Griega: Sintaxis Del Nuevo Testamento*, 500

<sup>33</sup> Wallace, *Gramática Griega: Sintaxis Del Nuevo Testamento*, 496

The great commission is not a great suggestion. The theories that interpret ‘as you make disciples,’ instead of ‘go and make disciples’ may be homiletical but not exegetical.

Todd Wilson emphasizes:

Healthy multiplication that advances the kingdom requires us to carry out Jesus’ command to make disciples by adding AND multiplying... We are to make disciples, and we are to go! If our disciple-making efforts don’t lead to multiplication in the form of starting new communities of faith, then what does that tell us about the health of our efforts? The “go” in Jesus’ Great Commission is inseparable from the multiplication of new churches. Disciple-making isn’t enough if it doesn’t produce the “go.”<sup>34</sup>

It is also important to clarify that the translation of the KJV “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” is entirely inaccurate. The Greek verb διδάσκω (teach) is never used in verse 19. Once again, the imperative used here is μαθητεύσατε (discipleship). It is fair to say that the mistake is corrected in the NKJV.

βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες are participles of means. Wallace explains:

They should not be taken as participles of accompanying circumstances. First, they do not conform to the regular pattern of it (they are in the present tense and go after the main verb). Second, these make good sense as media participles.<sup>35</sup> Baptism and teaching were the means to make disciples, and this is what we find in the Book of Acts. Scholar Henry Alford adds: “Both these present participles are the conditioning components of the imperative aorist preceding. The μαθητεύειν consists of two parts—the initiatory, admissory rite, and the subsequent teaching.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Todd Wilson, and Carl F. George, “*Multipliers: Leading beyond Addition*” (United States: Exponential, 2017).

<sup>35</sup> Wallace, *Gramática Griega: Sintaxis Del Nuevo Testamento*, 500

<sup>36</sup> Henry Alford, “Commentary on Matthew 28:4”. Greek Testament Critical Exegetical Commentary. <https://www.studydrive.net/commentaries/hac/matthew-28.html>. 1863-1878.



Bill Hull could not be more specific when he affirmed: “With two words, baptizing and teaching, Jesus clarified the disciple-making process.”<sup>37</sup> It is straightforward, baptizing new disciples means having them profess their faith; teaching is a lifelong process. Jesus said clearly: “Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:20).

Finally, discipleship is a relationship with the living Christ. “Discipleship is the process of becoming like Jesus by spending time. Discipleship classes alone won’t do it. Religious form won’t do it. The personal relationship between disciple and Teacher is the heart of discipleship.”<sup>38</sup>

### **A Three-dimensional Vision of the Great Commission**

The outcome of the Great Commission is to make disciples. Disciples produce disciples, not force disciples. Jesus’ missionaries were to go and preach. The Lord called them to proclaim the resurrection plus some other fundamental truths, and then baptized those who accepted them. These new believers were born into the kingdom of God as missionaries.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Hull, Bill, *“The Disciple-Making Church: Leading a Body of Believers on the Journey of Faith”* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010) 56.

<sup>38</sup> Jim Howard, Kameron DeVasher, Mark Howard, Staci Schefka, Jeff Akenberger, Gene Hall, Tom Hubbard, Justin Ringstaff, and Hélène Thomas, *“Discipleship Handbook: A Resource for Seventh-Day Adventist Church Members”* (Lansing, MI: The Training Center Church Committee of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2015)

<sup>39</sup> White, Ellen Gould Harmon. *“The Desire of Ages: The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Life of Christ”* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005)

Hull expounds: “Disciple-making included introducing people to Christ, building them up in faith, and sending them into the harvest field.”<sup>40</sup> He summarizes this process by what He calls the three Ds of disciple-making: deliver, develop, and deploy.

As always happens, some folks accept the message and others don’t. The disciples must follow up with those who received the news. They were instruments of reconciliation on Christ’s behalf. (2 Corinth 5:20).

The apostles knew very well what to do when their message was resisted. Jesus said on a previous occasion: “And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Assuredly, I say to you; it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” (Matthew 10: 14-15)

It means the disciples had the prophetic responsibility to share the news, but they could not force people to accept it. To receive the message depends on the listeners. (Ezequiel 2:7). The prophets were God’s heralds (Ex. 7:1-2; Jer. 1:4-10). Their primary role was to communicate God’s words. Their purpose was way beyond of just repeating what they heard. The prophets were preachers that spoke God’s words to change their listener’s way of thinking and behaving.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Church: Leading a Body of Believers on the Journey of Faith*, 54.

<sup>41</sup>Gary V. Smith, “*Los Profetas Como Predicadores: Introducción a Los Profetas Hebreos.*” (Nashville, TN: B & H Español, 2012), p.6

Yes, the mission is to make disciples, reached people for the kingdom (apostolic dimension of the great commission). Folks who do not accept the message, at least, are preached, as long as they want to listen (the prophetic dimension).

For this reason, it is pivotal to have a three-dimensional vision of the great commission. To see in 3D means the ability to perceive height, width, and depth. It is the added perception of depth that makes 3-D or stereoscopic vision so important.

The gospels give this three-dimensional vision. John emphasizes the width (extension) of the great commission. “Again, Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” (John 20:21). It merely states that their mission was a continuation of God’s mission. Christ calls all his followers to be his colleagues and fellow servants in His mission.<sup>42</sup> This dimension is reflected in many other parts, emphasizing the idea of taking the gospel worldwide. (Matthew 24:14; Acts 1:8; Revelation 14:6-13)

The first encounter of the risen Savior and his disciples in Luke, just like in John, happened the very first night after the resurrection. It is written:

<sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> And you are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:45-49)

It is fantastic that in Luke, we have not only the width or extension of the great commission (preach to all nations) but also the height. It is the content of it (to preach

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<sup>42</sup> Greenway, *Vayan y Hagan Discípulos!*, 22

repentance and forgiveness of sins). We will see the fulfillment of these commands in the Book of Acts.

Mark 16:15-16 kind of touch the width, height, and depth: “And He said to them, “Go into all the world (width) and preach the gospel to every creature (height). He who believes and is baptized will be saved (depth), but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Finally, Matthew is the cherry of the cake since He amplifies the great commission’s aim. The depth or purpose of the great commission is to make disciples. You go and preach; you baptize, you teach. The result is no other than disciples.

### **The Early Church Answer to the Great Commission**

The Gospels don’t report the disciples’ reaction to the great commission, but the book of Acts does. The first we find in such an excellent account is unity, prayer, and consecration (Acts 2:1). Jesus told them to wait for the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49), and they did so.

After the anointing of the Spirit, we find the disciples, not only the 12, preaching, and teaching. Remarkably, most of the speeches of the book refer to repentance and forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:37-38; 3:19-20; 5:31; 17:30-31). They received this command from Jesus. He told them right after the resurrection: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47)

You will find this same message throughout the book, starting with the very first sermon of Peter: “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the

Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38). New converts were baptized, symbolizing the forgiveness of sins. In the very first service, the day of Pentecost, about three thousand people were baptized. (Acts 2:41)

The same happened when Peter and John were called before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:27). Peter concluded: “Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31). These powerful messages impressed the hearts, and thousands were baptized.<sup>43</sup>

After such a significant first baptism, the question probably would be, where to gather such a big group for worship? In many cases, to confess Jesus was equivalent to be disfellowshipped of church and family. The disciples had learned from Jesus the importance of the οἶκος (the Greek word for home and household), and the ministry to small communities of believers in their contexts. We are told that Jesus sent his twelve and his seventy disciples to heal and teach from village to village and house-to-house (Luke 9:1-9; 10:1-11). Joel Comiskey researched Jesus’ homes ministry, and this is what he found<sup>44</sup>:

Jesus in the house of Peter (Matthew 8:14)

Jesus in the house of Matthew (Matthew 9:10)

Jesus in the house of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

Jesus in the house of Lazarus and his sisters (Luke 10:38-42)

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<sup>43</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, Shawn D. Wright, and E. Ray Clendenen. *“Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ”* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2006)

<sup>44</sup> Joel Comiskey, *“Making Disciples in the Twenty-First Century Church: How the Cell-Based Church Shapes Followers of Jesus”* (Moreno, CA: CCS Publishing, 2013) 61

Jesus in the house of Jairus (Mark 5:35-38)

Jesus healing two blind people in a house (Matthew 9:28-30)

Jesus in the house of Simon the leper (Matthew 26:6)

Jesus teaching his disciples in a house (Mark 7:17-18; 9:33; 10:10)

Jesus forgiving and healing a paralyzed person in a house (Luke 5:19)

Jesus in the home of a Pharisee (Luke 14:1)

Jesus instituted the Lord's supper in a house (Matthew 26:18)

After Pentecost, the disciples, following Jesus's examples, also met in the temple and homes. They broke bread in their homes, ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praised God, and enjoyed the favor of all the people. The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:46-47).

It is evident that after baptism, many people stay with the disciples. They were part of the new Christian family. They established churches. They did not own a sanctuary, but still, they were the church. Go and make disciples was a call to pray, preach, teach, baptize, and organize the new believers in small congregations called churches<sup>45</sup>. (Acts 14:21-23)

### **House Churches in the Early Church**

The first thing we learn about the church in the book of Acts is its simplicity. The church is defined as the assembly that meets to worship the risen Savior. It was "the

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<sup>45</sup> Raoul Dederen "*Teología: Fundamentos Bíblicos De Nuestra Fe*" (Bogotá: Asoc. Publicadora Interamericana -Gema, 2007).

appointed means for the salvation of men”<sup>46</sup> Acts 2:47 clearly says that the Lord added to the church (ἐκκλησία) every day, those who were to be saved. In Greek, ekklesia was a familiar word. From the fifth century BC onwards, it referred to the regular “assembly” of citizens in a city to decide matters affecting their welfare.<sup>47</sup>

In the same way, we learn that large buildings with stained glasses are not the church. “If you had asked another for directions to a church in any important city of the first-century world, you would have been directed to somebody’s private home!”<sup>48</sup>

In the book of Acts, the believers were the church. They did not have an elaborate liturgy of their own and still followed most of the Jewish rites. Nevertheless, they were a different entity. “The church is not a civic center, no social club or encounter group, no Sabbath morning meeting place. It is a new society, created for the salvation of a lost world, pointing to the kingdom to come.”<sup>49</sup>

For Wayne Grudem, the church is the congregation of all the saved.<sup>50</sup> Jesus depicted the church as a living-proactive organism when he said that ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against it’ (Matthew 16:18). The Apostle Paul states the same idea in Ephesians 1:22-23, where he affirms: “And God placed all things under his feet and

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<sup>46</sup> White, Ellen Gould Harmon. *The Acts of the Apostles: The Church Begins to Grow*. (Nampa, Ida.: Pacific Press Pub. Association, 2009).

<sup>47</sup> Robert Banks, “*Paul's Idea of Community: Spirit and Culture in Early House Churches*” (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic a Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2020).

<sup>48</sup> Del Birkey, “*The House Church*” (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988) 40.

<sup>49</sup> Rex D. Edwards. “*Every Believer the Church*” (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2013)15

<sup>50</sup> Wayne A Grudem, “*Teología Sistemática: Una Introducción a La Doctrina Bíblica*” (Miami: Editorial Vida, 2009).

appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

The church is not a building, program, or a denomination. The church is the holy people of God.

Luther much preferred the phrase “a holy Christian people” (Sancta Catholica Christiana) to the bare word “church” (Ecclesia). Ecclesia, he thought, is often taken to mean the church building, a most unfortunate usage; it is occasionally used to refer to the Christians in any one particular area or era, and this is somewhat better; but in reality, the church is the communion of all holy Christian people from all time, a reality that the word “Church” obscures. Luther felt that the abuses of the Papal hierarchy might have been reduced if ecclesia had been understood as “a holy Christian people,” the true meaning of the body of Christ. In German, Luther favored words for the Church as Haufen (group) or Versammlung (assembly) rather than such words as Gemeinschaft (association).<sup>51</sup>

According to the Bible, the church is the body of Christ—all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13). “Local churches are gatherings of people who claim the name of Christ. Members of a local church may or may not be members of the universal church, depending on the genuineness of their faith. The local church is where believers can fully apply the “body” principles of 1 Corinthians chapter 12—encouraging, teaching, and building one another up in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>52</sup>

In Acts chapter ten we see Peter evangelizing in Cornelius’ house, in Acts twelve, we observe that he, freed from prison, went directly to Mary’s house, where many were gathered together interceding (Acts 12:24).

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<sup>51</sup> Rex D. Edwards, “Every Believer the Church” *Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2013*, In Studies for Role of Women Commission at <https://www.adventistarchives.org/the-priesthood-of-believers.pdf>, Accessed on July 22, 2020. (p.18)

<sup>52</sup> GotQuestions.org. “Home.” GotQuestions.org. Last modified May 15, 2009. Accessed July 22, 2020. <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-the-church.html>.



Regarding Acts 12 home prayer gathering, Del Birkey, quoting F.F. Bruce, declares:

The mention of a prayer meeting in the home of Mary, Mark's mother (12:12), is further evidence that when they wanted to meet together, no place was suitable except the homes of the members. It is noteworthy that this prayer meeting was apparently not a meeting of the whole Jerusalem church, therefore, but rather only one of the other house churches. Evidence of this phenomenon mounts when, as F. F. Bruce points out, Peter and James apparently did not belong to the same household church. "If Peter belonged to the group which met in the home of Mary . . . he knew that James and 'the brethren' (whoever they were) met somewhere else (Acts 12:17).<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, other several house churches are mentioned in the New Testament, like the house of Priscila and Aquila (Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19), the house of Philemon (Philemon 2) and the house of Nymphas (Col. 4:15) that served as temples to accommodate the nascent congregations.<sup>54</sup> Some texts that support this concept are:

- "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)
- "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42)
- "So, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2:46)
- "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ." (Acts 5:42)
- "How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20)

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<sup>53</sup> Birkey, *The House Church*, 42

<sup>54</sup> Kurt W. Johnson, *"Successful Small Groups: from Theory to Reality"* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Association, 2011), 161.

- “So, the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.” (Acts 16:5)
- “The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” (1 de Corinthians 16:19)
- Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.” (Colossians 4:15)
- “To the beloved Apphia, Archippus, our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: (Philemon 1:2)

It is vital to clarify that these texts are not about small groups that meet in houses.

These were the typical congregations at the time. “Archaeological evidence suggests the average size household could accommodate about 30 to 35 comfortably. Although there is no extant church building built before Constantine, there are homes that were restructured for Christian assemblies. Graydon F. Snyder finds it amazing that we do not have more remains of such house churches, adding that, indeed, we may have remains of such but cannot recognize them.”<sup>55</sup>

“Even though Nero, Trajan, and other Roman leaders repressed Christianity by banning public assembly, the Spirit of God was still moving. Before A.D. 300, there is but one historical reference to a building for Christian gatherings, and that building was in Persia outside the Roman empire.”<sup>56</sup>

These house churches overcame Nero’s decree against any church building in 64 A.D. They also survived emperor Trajan (A.D. 64-313) decrees against secrets societies. Praise the Lord!

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<sup>55</sup> Birkey, *The House Church*, 55

<sup>56</sup> Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups: from Theory to Reality*, 161

## **A Culture of Multiplication in the Early Church**

After creating Adam and Eve, the Lord told them to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:29). In the same way, after giving us life through his death and resurrection, we have been given the command to make disciples, that is, to multiply spiritually.

Todd Wilson boldly declared:

“A vision rooted in multiplication conveys a strong commitment to sending and releasing disciples to plant churches that plant churches. When our vision is greater than growing and expanding our kingdom (your church, your network, your denomination, etc.), the fruit of disciples making produces churches that plant churches- ultimately growing and expanding God’s Kingdom.”<sup>57</sup>

The first disciples had that vision of multiplication. The growth of the early Church was exponential. Prompt in the book of Acts, Jesus is instructing the Apostles about their mission. On the day of Pentecost, 120 were in the Upper Room. Notably, Luke wants to highlight the rapid growth of the movement, which is confirmed by the baptism of about three thousand people on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:41).

The progress was unstoppable, to the point that Acts 4:2 speaks of about five thousand believers. Later in Acts 6:2, they are called a multitude. This is reconfirmed in Acts 6:7, which states: “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6: 9)

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<sup>57</sup> Todd Wilson, and Carl F. George, *Multipliers: Leading beyond Addition*, 45

This numerical growth did not stop. What follows next is an evangelistic explosion, not only in Jerusalem but throughout the Gentile world. However, growth was not just in terms of numbers. It is notable that despite the deprivation, there was enough provision for everyone. (Acts 2:45)

In terms of leadership, the multiplication culture of the early Church is rich. It starts with the twelve—particularly Peter, John, and James (Galatians 2:9). Then, the seven believers of Acts six chosen to serve the widows appears, from which two new leaders emerge, Stephen (Acts 7) and Philip. (Acts 8). This Philip also had four leaders' daughters who prophesied. (Acts 21:9)

Beginning with Acts 9, there is a renewal in the leadership. It highlights the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who would very soon become the Apostle Paul. With him, the influence of the first-century leaders reaches a new level. However, not only Paul emerges, but the spread of the gospel also involves new leaders like Ananias and Dorcas (Acts 9), Cornelius (Acts 10), Barnabas (Acts 11), Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen (Acts 13).

After Paul's second missionary trip, young leaders like Timothy and missionary couples like Aquila and Priscilla stand out. Luke himself is an essential leader of the moment. Wealthy business people, like Lydia, gave their lives to Jesus. (Acts 16) Furthermore, time would fail me to mention forerunners like Apollos (Acts 18), the elders that met in Ephesus (Acts 20), and so many more introduced in the book of Acts and the Epistles.

Amazingly, the early church was not only growing in new disciples, finances, and leadership. It was also increasing in the number of new churches. Despite persecution and

all kind of difficulties, they were growing. Acts 9:31 emphasizes: “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”

Disciples, leaders, and finances multiplication should lead to church multiplication also. In the same way, when churches are growing in faith, they are healthy and should multiply. Acts 16:5 testifies: “So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily.”

Church growth expert Donald McGavran enlightens this matter further by saying that the first common obstacle to multiplying churches never appeared in the early church, i.e., the cost of building buildings. The house church overcame the obstacle of introversion by self-exposing to a new section of society in each new house church. McGavran adds, “The physical fact of the house church should be taken into consideration in any assessment of the causes of the growth of the early church.”<sup>58</sup>

It is true that at the beginning, it was hard for the disciples to move outside of Jerusalem. Jesus specified the gospel must go to Jerusalem, Judea, to the end of the world. (Acts 1:8). It is said that since the apostles did not want to obey Acts 1:8, God sent Acts 8:1. First verse address mission, the second deals with persecution. It is easy to settle. Like the Israelites in the times of Josue, the apostles stop conquering. (Josue 13:13-15). On this occasion, God allowed his people to be hunt.

Ellen White explains:

The persecution that came upon the church in Jerusalem resulted in giving a great impetus to the work of the gospel. Success had attended the ministry of the word in that place, and there was a danger that the disciples would linger there too long, unmindful of the Savior’s commission to go to all the world. Forgetting that strength to resist evil is best gained by aggressive service, they began to think that they had no work so important as that of shielding the church in Jerusalem from the attacks of the

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<sup>58</sup> Birkey, *The House Church*, 60

enemy. Instead of educating the new converts to carry the gospel to those who had not heard it, they were in danger of taking a course that would lead all to be satisfied with what had been accomplished. To scatter His representatives abroad, where they could work for others, God permitted persecution to come upon them. Driven from Jerusalem, the believers “went everywhere preaching the word.”<sup>59</sup>

God always finds a way to fulfill his purposes. He did it in the past, and for sure, he will do it again in the future. The great commission is in perfect correlation with the planting of new churches.

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<sup>59</sup> *White, The Acts of the Apostles: The Church Begins to Grow*, 105

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CHURCH MISSION AND THE ON-LINE WORSHIP GATHERING**

#### *Biblical – Sociological Context*

*Are the biblical concepts of church and mission malleable enough to include the  
online worship gathering?*

A mission implies a specific task with which a person or a group is charged. Jesus said: "...As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (John 20:21). "Mission is participation in the work of God, not the work of an independent human initiative. And mission comprises more than work, for being sent is integral to the church's identity, to her very being."<sup>60</sup>

The task of the missionary is to preach the gospel to make disciples. The challenge is that while the gospel is everlasting, the world is ever-changing, so new methods must be continuously employed.

Ellen White emphasized that a revival and reformation under the Holy Spirit's ministration must be made. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of

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<sup>60</sup> Hank Voss, "*Priesthood of All Believers and the Missio Dei: A Canonical, Catholic, and Contextual Perspective*" (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016) xii

the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation means a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits, and practices.<sup>61</sup>

A change in ideas and theories, habits, and practices are a paradigm shift. If the church required it at any time, it is now.

White also stressed: “Men are needed who pray to God for wisdom, and who, under the guidance of God, can put new life into the old methods of labor and can invent new plans and new methods of awakening the interest of church members and reaching the men and women of the world.”<sup>62</sup>

In this context, Rosario enlightens:

Coca-Cola lost millions of dollars when, on April 23, 1985, the company decided to change the traditional formula and launch the New Coke, which is considered one of the worst marketing mistakes of history. Consumers opposed, and the original recipe had to return as the Classic-Coke. On the other side, the world’s most recognizable commercial icon, the Coca-Cola Contour Bottle, since 1916, has had all sorts of versions, sizes, and materials, including the El Salvador plastic bag or the bottle made from plants distributed in Denmark. It has helped the firm to reinvent itself and make millions of dollars.<sup>63</sup>

We should not negotiate the biblical foundations of our faith (the formula), but we can evaluate our presentation (the frosting) and make it more friendly.

As it was already explained, church, more than institutions, buildings, or programs, is the congregation of believers. Jesus was clear: “For where two or three are

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<sup>61</sup> Ellen Gould White. *“Instruction for Effective Christian Service: A Compilation from the Writings of Mrs. Ellen G. White”* (Washington, D.C.: Home Missionary Dept. of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1947) 267.

<sup>62</sup> Ellen Gould White, *“Welfare Ministry Instruction in Christian Neighborhood Service”* (Washington: Review and Herald Pub. Assn, 1952) 415

<sup>63</sup> Manuel A. Rosario “Urban Evangelism: Biblical-Sociological Principles to Reach the Cities” (Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2014) 77



gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20).

Ignatius of Antioch based his ecclesiological principle in this very verse when he stated:

“Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the universal church,” and the same taught

Tertullian.<sup>64</sup>

The difficulty is that this congregational model was always physical; however, after COVID 19, it abruptly became virtual. The world of missions has changed; there is a new normal of which the church is part. Traditional evangelism has joined with technology to make way for a whole new evangelizing strategy. Today we talk about digital discipleship and evangelism, digital disciples, digital missionaries, and much more. Cyberspace is an integral part of the mission field.

According to Jamie Domm:

Digital discipleship is a way to build relationships, meet the needs of the community, and advance the gospel message in the digital space, around a digital market, or by a digital tool. A digital disciple is one who accepts and assists in the spreading of the doctrines of Christ through the use of digital tools in the digital space. A digital missionary is one who shares their faith and beliefs in the digital area with digital tools and technologies.<sup>65</sup>

This book promotes the idea that the church’s mission far from being rigid is plastic enough to find people where they are. It also sustains that biblically and historically; the concept of the church can admit the online gathering.

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<sup>64</sup> Miroslav, Volf, “*After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*” (Grand Rapids Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998) 136

<sup>65</sup> Domm Jamie “*Digital Discipleship & Evangelism: A practical guide for outreach, community service, growth, and evangelism for conferences, local churches, and personal ministries.*” (Lincoln, NE: Advent Source, 2020) 4

## Contextualization

A critical aspect of the church's role in God's mission is contextualization. In the theological context, it implies a "careful discovery of what a text meant in the world or ambient in which it has been written, and what it means today in its final form."<sup>66</sup>

However, I will focus on the missional aspect.

To contextualize the mission is as vital as to contextualize the Bible.

"Contextualization is at the mixing point of gospel and culture. With thousands of ethnolinguistic groups, many with dialects and subcultural segments, the need to enable the Christian faith to be at home in each is a testimony to the need of contextualization."<sup>67</sup>

Nicholls declares:

Evangelical communicators have often underestimated the importance of cultural factors in communications. Some have been so concerned to preserve the purity of the gospel and its doctrinal formulation that they have been insensitive to the cultural thought patterns and behavior of those to whom they are proclaiming the gospel. Some have been unaware that terms such as God, sin, incarnation, salvation, and heaven convey different images in the mind of the hearers from those of the messenger. Even those hearers who have had prolonged contact with Christian missionaries or national Christians may continue to give a totally different interpretation to the gospel. For example, Mahatma Gandhi was a Hindu who had a long acquaintance with Christian missionaries and an extensive knowledge of Christian belief and practice. Yet he could write: "I had not been able to see any difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the Bhagavad Gita."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Cyprian FR. Okoronkwo, "Contextualization and Biblical Interpretation", (Place of publication not identified: LULU COM, 2017) 9

<sup>67</sup> Scott. A. Moreau, "Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models" (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2012) 19

<sup>68</sup> Bruce J. Nicholls, "Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture" (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2003) 8

To this reality, we must add the aggravating circumstance that we live in a globalized world. It is unnecessary to cross the seas to find different worldviews, but they coexist at various points on the planet.

After Jesus, Paul was the master of contextualization, but the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 evidence that the whole church was called to contextualize.

In this regard, Andrew James Prime comments:

Despite contextualization being a relatively new missiological term, the activity of contextualization is not recent. Since the time of Pentecost, Christians have sought to present the message of the gospel in terms that are understandable and culturally relevant to their hearers. In other words, they have sought to contextualize the gospel—defined earlier as the message of God’s good news centered on the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ and the implications of that message for daily life.<sup>69</sup>

The strategy of the Apostol Paul was this:

And to the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak, I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might, by all means, save some. (1 Corinthians 9:20-22)

Many unlearned have to try to decontextualize Paul. Contextualizing is not about diluting the gospel. One of the most beautiful contextualization cases is Acts 17: 16-34 when the apostle Paul speaks in the Areopagus about the unknown God. A close follow-up to Jesus and Paul's life will clearly show us what contextualizing is and what it is not. David Bosch will advocate by a somewhat compassionate contextualization and opposed

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<sup>69</sup> Prince, Andrew James. Contextualization of the Gospel: towards an Evangelical Approach in the Light of Scripture and the Church Fathers, 2015. p. 77.

to an over-contextualization. This last is defined as “subservient to the interests and ideological predilections of a separate group.”<sup>70</sup>

Yes, the church has a task, but it must be fulfilled, considering what Paul, Shaw, and Tiénou call critical contextualization, which permitted the church to go acclimatizing the gospel without losing its essential components.

According to the authors, this process entails 1) Phenomenological analysis to study the local culture phenomenologically. “Before judging the people, it is important to understand their beliefs because it is based on these that they act.” 2) Ontological Critique which implies meaningful communication among cultures, tests of truth, and moral judgment of evil 3) Theological Criteria where the pastor or the missionary leads the church in a Study of the Scriptures to the questions at hand and 4) “The gospel is not simply information to be communicated. It is a message to which the people must respond.”<sup>71</sup>

Finally, I want to express that this new contextualization must consider, the most significant ‘new continent’, the cyberspace. Especially new generations are digitally born, and they see everything through the screen of a cellphone. There is not such a thing as a contextualization apart of the digital space. Also, we have to be aware of the differences between them and the digital immigrants.

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<sup>70</sup> Stan, Nussbaum, “Book Review: *Transformation through Compassionate Mission: David J. Bosch's Theology of Contextualization*.” (International Bulletin of Missionary Research 28, no. 4 (2004): 184–184).

<sup>71</sup> Hiebert, Paul G., Robert Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou. *Understanding Folk Religion, a Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1999) 27.

Digital Immigrants learned how to e-mail and use social networks late in life. Unlike most Digital Immigrants, Digital Natives live much of their lives online, without distinguishing between the online and the offline. Instead of thinking of their digital identity and their real-space identity as separate things, they just have an identity (with representations in two, or three, or more different spaces). They are joined by a set of standard practices, including the amount of time they spend using digital technologies, their tendency to multitask, their tendency to express themselves and relate to one another in ways mediated by digital technologies, and their pattern of using the technologies to access and use the information and create new knowledge and art forms. “For these young people, new digital technologies—computers, cell phones, Sidekicks—are primary mediators of human-to-human connections. They “have created a 24/7 network that blends the human with the technology to a degree we haven’t experienced before.”<sup>72</sup>

Churches are called to face this reality or lose relevance. It is not the first time the church contextualizes. However, especially after COVID 19, this is probably one of the most urgent, sudden, and uncertain times.

One of the main problems facing this challenge is generational. Young people lead the scientific, digital, business, economic world, but not the religious world. It is like asking a foreigner to speak the language of a country as a native. It could be done, but it is unusual. “Digital natives feel as comfortable in online spaces as offline ones. They do not think of their hybrid lives as anything remarkable. Digital Natives have not known anything, but a life connected, and to the world of bits, in this manner.”<sup>73</sup> For these changes, there is no tomorrow.

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<sup>72</sup> John G. Palfrey, and Urs Gasser. *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives.* (New York: Basic Books, 2010) 20, 22-23

<sup>73</sup> John G. Palfrey, and Urs Gasser. *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*, 23

## Missio Dei

An element we should not ignore is Missio Dei's concept, which refers to the missionary nature of God. This well-known missional concept teaches that ultimately, the mission belongs to God. He is the most significant missionary ever. He gave the first missionary walk on His pilgrimage after Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. He was the one who said: "Adam, where are you?" (Genesis 3: 9).

The great theologian George F. Vicedom popularized the term in his book *Missio Dei* in 1958. A central part of his thesis states that men's mission is an extension of God's Mission. It can be seen in the constant sending found in the Gospels, like the sending of disciples (Matthew 10:40) and the sending of the Seventy (Luke 10: 1-12).

"In early church times, Irenaeus and Tertullian touched upon the question of sending the Son from God. Later, Athanasius and the Cappadocian fathers develop the concept of sending the Son from the Father and the Holy Spirit from the Father through the Son. But originally this concept was used by Augustine in Western discussions of the Trinity for "the sending of God (the Son)" by the Father (John 3:17; 5:30; 11:42; 17:18)"<sup>74</sup>

Vicedom amplifies the vision with the following insight: "On the one hand, Missio Dei means that God has done everything and does everything and without Him, all mission is vain. On the other hand, the Missio Dei does not make the individual a

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<sup>74</sup> Vladimir Ubeivolt, *"Rethinking Missio Dei among Evangelical Churches in an Eastern European Orthodox Context"* (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Langham Monographs, 2016) 7

superfluous Christian or leaves him without responsibilities; on the contrary, he receives the greatest mandate on earth.”<sup>75</sup>

This balance is critical; God owns the mission. However, the church is the steward of it. Paul wrote: “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Corinthians 4:1). He also stated: “Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18).

No doubt, “Mission is a permanent aspect of the life of the Church as long as the Church is, in some way or another, standing in a relationship to the world. In the words of Emilio Castro: ‘Mission is the fundamental reality of our Christian life ... Our life in this world is life in mission.’”<sup>76</sup>

John L. Dybdahl articulated the same thought in the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He said:

The mission is central to our identity; Jesus did not create the church and then gave her a mission as one of her responsibilities. The divine plan of salvation precedes the church. Mission gave birth to the church, so the mission is the mother of the church. The very essence and nature of the church is missionary. If the church stops being missional, she has failed in one of her responsibilities and ceases being the church and becomes only a social organization with a religious orientation.<sup>77</sup>

This statement reminds me of a friend’s affirmation: “The mission has a church. There is a church because there is a mission and not the other way around.”

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<sup>75</sup> Thomas Schirmacher. *Missio Dei*. (Germany: Wipf and Stocks Publishers, 2017) p. 7,8

<sup>76</sup> David Jacobus Bosch, “Witness to the World: the Christian Mission in Theological Perspective” (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006) 30, 31

<sup>77</sup> John Dybdahl. *Adventist Mission in 21st Century*. (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999).

Structures and strategies have the only purpose of sustaining the vision by and for which we live. If not longer fit for service, they must be adjusted or discarded for the greater good of the mission.<sup>78</sup> I read somewhere that “the structure serves the mission and not the mission to the structure.” So, if the structure hinders the mission, you are supposed to change the system, not the mission.

### **Transforming mission according to David Bosh**

The discussion about mission has been monumental. Its theology, the church's role, and how to get it done have been some of the most critical aspects gravitating in the missiological circles and the daily conversation of informed Christians passionate about the Great Commission.

In this section, I explore the perspectives of one of the greatest missiologists of all times, David Jacobus Bosch (13 December 1929 – 15 April 1992), whose studies represent a breakthrough in thinking about mission. Bosh was an influential South African missiologist and theologian best known for his book ‘Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission’ (1991) — a significant work on post-colonial Christian Mission.

Wilbert R. Shenk said about him:

David Bosch’s tragic death in an automobile accident April 15, 1992, has left all of us who have known him as a friend, colleague, outstanding mission theologian, and church statesman with a sense of irreparable loss. Along with his vast knowledge of the field of biblical studies, theology, church history, and

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<sup>78</sup> Anthony J. Gittins and Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Living Mission Interculturally: Faith, Culture, and the Renewal of the Praxis* (Liturgical Press, 2015).



missiology, David Bosch had the rare ability to distill the insight and wisdom to meet the demands of the day.<sup>79</sup>

In his colossal book of almost 600 pages, described by others as three books in one, Bosch embraces Thomas Kuhn's term, "paradigm shift," of Kuhn's controversial book 'The Structures of Scientific Revolutions' (1962). Both books have had a tremendous revolutionary impact on secular and religious lives.

Bosch considers that the mission, rather than being something static, has been in constant movement, embracing the times, cultures, and circumstances of their primary actors, the missionaries. "Bosch's argument throughout the three major sections of the book (New Testament Models of Mission; Historical Paradigms of Mission; and Toward a Relevant Missiology) is that there is no one meta-paradigm for missions, it is a constantly transforming paradigm."<sup>80</sup>

Once again, Bosch refers to the mission as something moving and not merely static. Even in the use of the word itself. This element is key to our dissertation, so I decide to expose what Bosch presents as his mission doctrine. He declares:

Since the 1950s, there has been a remarkable escalation in the use of the word 'mission' among Christians. This went hand-in-hand with a significant broadening of the concept, at least in certain circles. Until the 1950s, mission, even if not used in a univocal sense, had a relatively circumscribed set of meanings. It referred to (a) the sending missionaries to a designated territory, (b) the activities are undertaken by such ministers, (c) the geographical area where the preacher was active, (d) the agency which dispatched the missionaries, (e) the

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<sup>79</sup> David Jacobus Bosch, "*Believing in the Future toward a Missiology of Western Culture*" (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, n.d.) 12.

<sup>80</sup> Bob Whitesel. "THEOLOGY & A Review of David Bosch's 'Transforming Mission.'" ChurchLeadership.wiki, 26 Jan. 2018, churchhealthwiki.wordpress.com/2018/01/26/theology-a-review-of-david-boschs-transforming-mission/.

non-Christian world or mission field or (f) the centers from where the missionaries operated headquarters on the mission field.<sup>81</sup>

Right in the first section of his book, Bosch establishes his theology of mission, which he calls 'The New Testament Models of Mission' but before that, the author gives us a glimpse of what he calls Mission in the Old Testament (pp. 16-20).

Bosch argues: "I might be asked whether one should not begin with the Old Testament in search of an understanding of mission. This is a legitimate question. There is for the Christian Church and the Christian Theology; no New Testament divorced from the Old. However, on the mission's issue, we run into difficulties here, particularly if we adhere to the traditional understanding of mission as the sending of preachers to distant places."<sup>82</sup>

For Him, even the book of Jonas cannot be quoted for this purpose. It is critical to start with Jesus; it is essential to understand what mission was for Jesus and the early church. Jesus is particularly crucial because of his broad sense of mission. As he specifically stated: "It embraces both the poor and the rich, both the oppressed and the oppressor, both the sinner and the devout. His mission is to dissolve alienation and break down walls of hostility"<sup>83</sup>

Bosch also appoints as remarkable that Jesus placed so much attention on the Gentiles, which is manifested in his encounters, but also his parables. He highlights the theological impact of the Kingdom of God (*Malkuth Yahweh* in Hebrew). It does not

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<sup>81</sup> David Jacobus Bosch. "*Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*" (Orbis Books, 2011) 1

<sup>82</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 17.

<sup>83</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 28.

appear in the Old Testament but is undoubtedly central to Jesus' entire ministry, and so it is likewise central to his understanding of his mission.<sup>84</sup>

On the other hand, "the Kingdom of God" (βασιλεία θεοῦ) is also undoubtedly central to Jesus's entire ministry. It is likewise central to his understanding of his mission. One may even say that, for Jesus, God's Kingdom is the starting point and context for mission." He will later affirm the early church's failures in proclaiming this Kingdom, ceasing to be movement and turning into an institution, even when he recognizes that it was inevitable. For Bosch, the Kingdom is essential, but he does not want to stop there.

The New Testament is the Missionary Book,<sup>85</sup> and he understands that Matthew, Luke, and Paul are keys to grasping the real meaning of what was a mission in reality for the Early Church.

Whitesel commenting Bosch states:

Within the New Testament itself, we encounter different models of mission; Matthew's emphasis falls on disciple-making, Luke's on solidarity with the poor, and Paul's has a definite eschatological dimension. The mission is being "transformed" and redefined by the biblical authors for and within the different contexts. The contextual nature of defining mission is a significant premise for Bosch. "A basic argument of this book has been that, from the very beginning, the missionary message of the Christian church incarnated itself in the life and world of those who had embraced it."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 31.

<sup>85</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 54.

<sup>86</sup> Bob whitesel. "THEOLOGY & A Review of David Bosch's 'Transforming Mission.'" ChurchLeadership.wiki, 26 Jan. 2018, churchhealthwiki.wordpress.com/2018/01/26/theology-a-review-of-david-boschs-transforming-mission/.

Bosch explains that for the past two centuries, missionaries rightly appealed to the Great Commission (Making disciples to all nations). Still, they forgot that it could not be adequately understood in isolation to the whole gospel of Matthew.<sup>87</sup>

He also states that Luke is critical as a writer of the book of Luke but also the writer of the book of Acts. There is no doubt today among scholars that there is a continuation between the Mission of Jesus in Luke and the mission of the early church in Acts.

In the case of Paul, who is, after Jesus, the critical missionary of the first century, we find the mission to the metropolis.<sup>88</sup> In this regard, Bosch declares: “Paul’s sense of concern for the Gentiles of the Roman Empire evinces itself in a deep awareness that he must proclaim the gospel. It is a charge laid upon him: ‘Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel’ (1 Cor. 9:16).

Bosch remarks how until the 16th century, the concept of the mission was inextricably linked to the theme of the Trinity, that is to the sending of the Son by the Father and the sending of the Spirit by the Son. It assimilates the mission to a chain that has its beginning in God Himself. In this sense, a key text is John 20:21, which says: “Then, Jesus said again to them: Peace be to you. As the Father sent me, I also send you.”

This text of John is outstanding since the word mission communicates the idea of sending, Latin verb *Mittere*. *Mission* means by etymological definition, the action and

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<sup>87</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 55.

<sup>88</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 129.

effect of sending, and *Transmission* are the action of sending from one place to another. Commission is the action of sending a group of people.

For Bosch, the NT is the most critical missionary document. He argues that while for Matthew, the mission is to make disciples, for Luke-Acts, the mission is the forgiveness and solidarity of the poor. I add that the mission in Luke-Acts is condensed in the announcement of the binomial repentance-forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47, Acts 2:38, Acts 3:19, Acts 17:30).

However, the idea conveyed by the author is that the mission has undergone paradigmatic changes throughout history and has been nuanced also in territorial function when speaking of the missionary paradigms of the Eastern Church and the Western paradigm. The missionary paradigm of the Protestant reform, the postmodern missionary paradigm, and the new elements of the ecumenical paradigm and the multiple ways of fulfilling the mission are also abundant. The mission in terms of substance is one; in the form, it has been historically multiform.

Bosch also has his detractors; he has been criticized because of the extensive scope of his theory of mission. He is inclined to the view that mission includes much more than evangelism and salvation only. My point is not to endorse his complete paradigm but to call our attention to the transforming nature of the mission.

### **Mission and Kingdom According to Arthur F. Glasser**

I also wanted to invite a second exponent, Arthur F. Glasser, and allies, to share the story of God's Mission in the Bible through their classical 'Announcing the Kingdom.' For them, if the church desires to understand what they call the full biblical

revelation of God concerning the mission, it will be necessary for the church to listen to the Old and the New Testament witnesses.<sup>89</sup>

This aspect is exciting since even when the authors are centered in the Kingdom as it relates to mission, they do not begin their dissertation in the New Testament as Bosch does; instead, they start with the very beginning. These authors defend the thesis that the whole Bible is a missionary book, and the story of humanity is the story of the mission.

In this regard, George Eldon Ladd comments:

“The Biblical idea of the Kingdom of God is deeply rooted in the Old Testament and is grounded in the confidence that there is one eternal, living God who has revealed Himself to men and who has a purpose for the human race which He has chosen to accomplish through Israel. The Biblical hope is, therefore, a religious hope; it is an essential element in the revealed will and the redemptive work of the living God.”<sup>90</sup>

Glasser’s and allies’ theology of mission is developed through history. That is why he and his colleagues start with what they call God’s mission at the beginning, where they portray the whole Bible as a missionary book and weave the history of humanity with the mission. God’s mission through Israel and God’s mission to the nations. It also explains how the kings of Israel challenged God’s rule and, as a result, they were sent into exile among the nations.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Glasser, Arthur F., et al. *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible*. (Claretian Publications, 2005)

<sup>90</sup> George Eldon Ladd “*The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God*” (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011) 16

<sup>91</sup> Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 90-105

The authors state: “Abraham’s election and God’s covenant with him represent the first expression of God’s redemptive concern for all nations. As a result, Abraham should be regarded as the pioneer in the mission.”<sup>92</sup>

According to these authors, after Abraham, God continued through his descendants and finally Israel from whom came the Messiah. Both Bosch and Glasser agree that the mission goes to a new level in the NT without a doubt.

The great authors of *‘Announcing the Kingdom’* finally reach to Jesus’s inauguration of his Kingdom, what they see as a continuation of that everlasting Kingdom of God. According to these scholars, the whole missiological platform of the gospel is based on the Kingdom’s announcement.

Jesus not only inaugurates the Kingdom, but his ministry also was foretold to demonstrate the Kingdom. Jesus spoke about the Kingdom in his phase of grace (First Coming) and his phase glory (Second Coming). He said about the Kingdom as being here among us (Luke 17:21) and near (Matthew 25:31). He also called the parables the mysteries of the kingdom. He taught about it in parables (growth parables, banquet parables, stewardships parables, seeking parables). In other words, a central objective of Jesus’ mission was to announce the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:43).

Maxwell upholds:

The kingdom of heaven is a frequent theme in Jesus’ parables. It is the realm over which Christ Himself is the undisputed King of kings and Lord of lords. It is the domain in which His lordship is even now fully operative. In other words, all who truly belong to the kingdom of heaven have formally yielded to Christ’s lordship. To enter the kingdom, therefore, is to enter into eternal life. In short, the kingdom

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<sup>92</sup> Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 57

is synonymous with the sphere of salvation—that eternal realm where the redeemed have their true citizenship (Phil. 3:20).<sup>93</sup>

I think Maxwell is right. The center of the kingdom is the king. When associating with the kingdom, the mission of the church elevates to an even more significant dimension. A kingdom mindset is a mission mindset. In the end, the mission and the kingdom points in the same direction, the king.

### **The On-line Worship Gathering**

The online worship experience has become the norm during the COVID 19 era. It would look like if the whole set of worship patterns became obsolete at once. Douglas Estes foretold this transition more than a decade ago, with his classical *SimChurch: Being the church in the virtual world*, where back in 2009 he said:

Today a new community of people of God has begun. We won't find it on the streets. Many of us won't even recognize it as a church. We all know churches – Some are traditional, some are modern, some are mega, some are emergent. For all of their apparent differences, each of these churches is the same- variations on the physical church in the modern era... A new gathering of believers is emerging, a church not in the real world of bricks and mortar virtual but in the virtual world of IP addresses and shared experiences. This type of church is unlike any church the world has ever seen. It has the power to break down social barriers, unite believers from all over the world, and build the kingdom of God with a widow's mite of financing. It is an entirely different type of church from any the world has ever seen.<sup>94</sup>

For Estes, a church is a localized assembly of the people of God dwelling in a meaningful community with the task of building the kingdom. With this concept in mind,

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<sup>93</sup> George MacArthur “*Parables*” (NA, Nelson Books, 2015) 119

<sup>94</sup> Douglas, Estes “*SimChurch: Being the Church in the Virtual World*” (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009) 17



he defines the online church as a virtually localized assembly of the people of God who dwell in a meaningful community with the task of building the kingdom.

Online church is a church, in the same way, that house churches and megachurches are also churches. What is different is in the way they assemble. We could say the same thing about other forms of churches; for example, a house church would be a localized-in-houses-only assembly of God's people. If I am in a building with you, I am present, whereas if I am meeting you via Zoom, then I am tele-present.<sup>95</sup>

Nick Small, an online expert comment: "Historically, tradition and word-of-mouth have been the way churches have expanded their reach. Today, modern technologies have created new options for getting church services out to those who need them and cannot attend a service in person. Live streaming services have brought the new potential to church and other religious services."<sup>96</sup>

Small, also explains that when you stream a church service, you can:

- Reach members during emergency pandemics like COVID-19.
- Allow members who are sick or injured, too old to make it in person, or have a disability that makes it difficult to travel to watch your service.
- Live streams help members who are traveling and want to continue to participate in their faith community.

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<sup>95</sup> Douglas Estes "*The One Thing That Makes or Breaks Online Church.*" The Center for Pastor Theologians. The Center for Pastor Theologians, March 25, 2020. Last modified March 25, 2020. Accessed August 9, 2020. <https://www.pastortheologians.com/articles/2020/3/25/the-thing-about-online-church>.

<sup>96</sup> Nick Small, "7 Live Streaming Solutions for Your Church - 2020 Update." Dacast. Last modified June 23, 2020. Accessed August 7, 2020. <https://www.dacast.com/blog/7-best-live-streaming-services-for-your-church/>.

- Extend your reach beyond your local community and help people to connect.
- Create a live stream of your sermon or broadcast a private event for members of your congregation who cannot attend.
- Record your live streams and make them available as video on demand. This is also a great way to lock in the experience of each event forever. It allows people who missed the live event to watch it later on their own time.

Karla Hovde, another expert in the topic, citing creative worship coach Jason Moore emphasizes: “Think about making online worship shorter in length, but broader in scope.” Instead of creating a long, elaborate experience, think about having a more condensed service and invites people to an online prayer time on Monday, a youth group meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, or some other midweek experience.<sup>97</sup>

One of the biggest mistakes a worship leader can make is extrapolating the full regular service to the virtual context. On the other hand, when done right, the possibilities to grow the kingdom are unlimited.

In this same article, Karla offers other eight tips to make the service engaging:

- **Adapt.** Find ways to make the service more interactive and participatory
- **Get closer to the camera.** Avoid wide shots of the sanctuary. Make sure the speaker is well-lit and close to the camera and microphone.
- **Hook viewers from the beginning.** Give them a return on investment (ROI) right away. If you start your live-streamed service with a standard welcome and announcements, people will scroll past and find another stream to watch.

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<sup>97</sup> Dakotas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, Karla Hovde. “10 Tips to Make Online Worship Engaging.” Dakotas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Accessed August 9, 2020. <https://www.dakotasumc.org/news/10-tips-to-make-online-worship-engaging>.

- **Think beyond the live stream.** The people who feel the most isolated during this virus are often the ones who have the most challenges with technology.
- **Dream big.** This is the time to try something new in worship.
- **Connect with kids.** Record a video of someone telling a Bible story for kids each week.
- **Update your website.** Your website is the new front door of your church.
- **Be ready for guests.** Each week assume someone is participating in your online worship for the first time. During the opening, always welcome guests.

Let us take advantage of this great opportunity we have with the online gathering.

We know that the church has a history and habit of resisting technological changes.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Pam, Smith, “Online Mission and Ministry: A Theological and Practical Guide” (London: SPCK, 2015)

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **LIVING GENERATIONS SPIRITUALITY & CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

#### *Sociological Context*

*How do living generations embrace spirituality and church attendance?*

To assess economic, political, religious, and social trends over time, demographers compare groups of people associated by birth year. “Here’s a look at six generations (groups) of Americans in the 20th century: The Greatest Generation (or GI Generation), the Silent Generation, baby boomers, Generation X, millennials and Generation Z. There are sometimes variations in the birth year that begins or ends a generation, depending on the source.”<sup>99</sup>

It is true the term generations have been used with ambiguity, and there is even opposition to the concept itself. For instance, Vern L. Bengtson and W. Andrew Achenbaum argue that we should use the term cohort or age group to refer to those who have been born at roughly the same point in chronological time and who therefore experience specific environmental or historical events at a common topic in their life

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<sup>99</sup> “American Generation Fast Facts.” CNN. Cable News Network, August 17, 2019. Last modified August 17, 2019. Accessed August 11, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/06/us/baby-boomer-generation-fast-facts/index.html>.

course. For them, the term generation should only reflect the ranked-descendent ordering of individuals within families primarily.<sup>100</sup>

According to Michael Dimock, expert of the Pew Research Center, generational cutoff points are not an exact science. They should be viewed as tools. However, their boundaries are not unreasonable.

Their span often considers generations, but there is no agreed-upon formula for how long that span should be. At 16 years (1981 to 1996), our working definition of Millennials is equivalent in age span to their preceding generation, Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980). By this definition, both are shorter than the Baby Boomers (19 years) – the only generation officially designated by the U.S. Census Bureau, based on the famous surge in post-WWII births in 1946 and a significant decline in birthrates after 1964.<sup>101</sup>

The Bible tells stories that show how quickly radical generational changes can occur. Judges 2:10 - 11 declares: “After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals.” The concept of generations those days was different from today. However, it gives an idea of the changes that can occur in a few years.

Vern L. Bengtson, author of the book, *Families, and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations*, abounds:

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<sup>100</sup> Bengtson Vern L., Achenbaum W. Andrew, “*The Changing Contract across Generations*” (New York: A. de Gruyter, 1993) 10.

<sup>101</sup> Dimock, Michael. “Defining Generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins.” *Pew Research Center*. Pew Research Center, July 28, 2020. Last modified July 28, 2020. Accessed August 19, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>.

We consider the question of whether individuals born within a common period of history share common perceptions of religion, spirituality, and God. We ask whether and how the perceptions of one generation differ from those born earlier or later. This is especially important for a multigenerational study of religion since religion in America has changed significantly in conjunction with the significant historical events and social transformations over the past century.<sup>102</sup> Sociologists of religions explain that there has been a systematic change in how

different generations embrace spirituality, especially in church attendance, festivals, and religious traditions. In this regard, the Pew Research declares: “According to recent surveys Generation Z is the least religious generation. About one third have no religion—about the same proportion as Millennials—compared with 23 percent, 17 percent, and 11 percent among Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation.”<sup>103</sup>

This study upholds that all generations are somewhat declining in church attendance, and all could benefit from the online worship gathering. Also, especially the newer generations might be attracted to a rethink and renewed technology-based micro-church plant model.

### **The Greatest Generation (GI)**

The GI is the group born in 1924 or earlier. The generation of John F. Kennedy, Walt Disney, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, and many others.

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<sup>102</sup> Bengtson, Vern L. Bengtson, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down Across Generations* (Oxford University Press, 2013) 79, 80.

<sup>103</sup> Michael Lipka, “Millennials increasingly are driving the growth of nones” Pew Research Center, May 12, 2015, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/12/millennials-increasingly-are-driving-growth-of-nones/>.

In their classical, *The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*, Williams

Strauss and Neil Howe comment about the Great Generation:

The unstoppable energy of G.I.s is well characterized in their most enduring comic strip character: Superman. Conceived by two thirtyish cartoonists, Superman became famous just before their G.I. peers entered World War II and themselves began showing “powers and abilities beyond those of mortal men.” Everything about the Superman story reads like a parable of G.I.s on the move—the special child, the corrupt older (Lost) Lex Luthor, the rocklike manliness and Formica-like blandness, the unvarying success of Superman strength used for community good... No other generation this century has felt (or been) so Promethean, so godlike in its collective, world-bending power. Nor has any been so adept in its aptitude for science and engineering. So too did they become the nation's greatest-ever economists, social engineers, and community planners, producing what Seymour Martin Lipset in 1960 termed “the shift away from ideology toward sociology.”<sup>104</sup>

It is fair to say that many leading scholars like Paul Fussell, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and Joseph J. Ellis have challenged the Greater Generation's notion, popularized in 1998 by Tom Brokaw. For them, “the best way to honor this generation is not to falsify it but to humanize it. The only way this can be done is to follow the truth where it leads and include the blemished and valorous.”<sup>105</sup> However, they recognize it fights with the irresistible temptation to create a satisfying myth.

Whatever the arguments in both sides could be, these are facts:

They (G.I.s) grew up in the Great Depression. They drove some of the first automobiles on the first paved highways in America. They... built our nation's infrastructure. They strung wires across our country and brought electricity and telephones to homes throughout America. They bought radios and invented the first television. They landed on the beaches at Normandy, raised the flag atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima, and defended our freedom in World War II. They were the first to enter space and chose to go to the moon. Today, their generation

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<sup>104</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe “*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*” (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 263-264.

<sup>105</sup> Kenneth D. Rose “*Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II.*” (New York: Routledge, 2012) 3.

is vanishing from the Earth. They once numbered more than 12 million, but only 1.2 million survive. A total of 1,000 members of the World War II generation die every day.<sup>106</sup>

In terms of spirituality and religious affiliation, a study of the Pew Research Center in September 2018 stressed the religious composition of adults in the *Greatest Generation*. The study showed that 86% defined themselves as Christians, 6% as Non-Christian Faiths, and 8% as Unaffiliated (religious “none”). The study also specified that 66% of them believe in God (absolutely certain), 15% believe in God (fairly certain), and 4% believe in God (not too/not at all certain). Only 7% said they do not believe in God, while 3% stated that they did not know.

When asked about the importance of religions in their lives, 72% said it was very important, 15% somewhat important, 7% not too important, 6% not important, and 1% did not know. It is also remarkable that despite their age, 51% attended religious services at least once a week, 23% once or twice a month, or a few times a year, 25 % went seldom or never, and 1% did not know. 69 % of this cohort pray at least daily, 70% feel spiritual peace, 45 read the Bible at least once a week, 69% believe in heaven, and 31% consider there are specific standards for what is right or wrong, while 62% deem that right or wrong depends on the situation.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Bill Tinsley, Religion columnist. “Religion: Remembering the 'Greatest Generation'.” WacoTrib.com. Last modified May 24, 2014. Accessed August 12, 2020. [https://wacotrib.com/news/local/religion-remembering-the-greatest-generation/article\\_09e9ad41-023d-5fd6-9e4a-0bc46a4e3a64.html](https://wacotrib.com/news/local/religion-remembering-the-greatest-generation/article_09e9ad41-023d-5fd6-9e4a-0bc46a4e3a64.html).

<sup>107</sup> “Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics.” Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Last modified September 19, 2018. Accessed August 12, 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/greatest/>.



## The Silent Generation

The Silent Generation includes everyone born after December 31, 1927, and before January 1, 1946, in a time of economic insecurity, they were either part of or born during World War II. They were labeled as Silent in 1951 by a Time magazine article because they were way more cautious than their parents. It said: “By comparison with the ‘Flaming Youth’ of their fathers & mothers, today’s younger generation is a still, small flame.”<sup>108</sup>

Commonly referred to as traditionalists, the members of this generation remain loved and well respected. Their effort to avoid waste is significantly different from the modern age’s flashy and luxury expenditure. “Silent generation characteristics include discipline, upholding values, gratitude, and an appreciation for the “simplicities” in life... Many had to seek employment and pursue challenging ventures to experience economic relief and freedom.”<sup>109</sup>

Abramson amplifies:

The population that existed during this period was considered to be oppressed, owing to the constraints and fears of the war. Silent generation facts point to significant hardships due to Communism, the Great Depression, and a lack of social pleasures as we know it. This period included great unemployment and the resulting difficulties from an inability to put food on the table to keep a roof over

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<sup>108</sup> “American Generation Fast Facts.” CNN. Cable News Network, August 17, 2019. Last modified August 17, 2019. Accessed August 12, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/06/us/baby-boomer-generation-fast-facts/index.html>.

<sup>109</sup> Abramson, Alexis, and Name \*. “The Silent Generation Characteristics and Facts You Need to Know.” Dr. Alexis Abramson - Expert Advice for Seniors, Baby Boomers, Caregivers, 50+ Market. Last modified August 13, 2018. Accessed August 12, 2020. <https://www.alexisabramson.com/the-silent-generation-characteristics-and-facts-you-need-to-know/>.

their head. It was marked as a group of struggling seniors. They are distinguished by a connection to a group identity rather than an individual one.<sup>110</sup>

Members of this generation are the 46<sup>th</sup> president of the USA, Joe Biden, Sen.

Bernie Sanders, and Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York City. It is a tiny cohort. According to the Pew Research Center, this generation numbered just 30 million in 2015. At the time, there were 75 million baby boomers (1946-1964), 66 million Gen Xers (1965-1976), 75 million millennials (1977 to 1995), and 69 million in Gen Z (1996 to now and still growing).<sup>111</sup>

Strauss and Neil assert:

They are interested in the system rather than individual enterprise.” Only 2 percent wished to be self-employed. Most of the rest wanted to work in big corporations offering job security. “Never had American youth been so withdrawn, cautious, unimaginative, indifferent, unadventurous—and silent,” G.I. historian William Manchester later “quipped. The SILENT GENERATION was a name these young people didn’t especially like, but they knew it fit. “We had no leaders, no program, no sense of our own power, and no culture exclusively our own,” admitted Frank Conroy. “Our clothing, manners, and lifestyle were unoriginal—scaled-down versions of what we saw in the adults.”<sup>112</sup>

In terms of spirituality and religious affiliation, the Pew Research Center study in September 2018 also underlined the religious composition of adults in the Silent Generation. The study showed that 85% defined themselves as Christians, 4% as Non-Christian Faiths, and 11% as Unaffiliated (religious “none”). The study also specified that

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<sup>110</sup> Abramson, The Silent Generation Characteristics and Facts You Need to Know.

<sup>111</sup> Mathews, Jay. “Perspective | The Silent Generation Deserves to Be Heard in Our Classrooms.” The Washington Post. WP Company, January 18, 2020. Last modified January 18, 2020. Accessed August 12, 2020. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/the-silent-generation-deserves-to-be-heard-in-our-classrooms/2020/01/16/1ecf56cc-38a7-11ea-bb7b-265f4554af6d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/the-silent-generation-deserves-to-be-heard-in-our-classrooms/2020/01/16/1ecf56cc-38a7-11ea-bb7b-265f4554af6d_story.html).

<sup>112</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe “*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*” (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 263-264

71% of them believe in God (absolutely certain), 16% believe in God (fairly certain), and 4% believe in God (not too/not at all certain). Only 6% said they do not believe in God, while 2% specified that they did not know.

When asked about the importance of religions in their lives, 67% said it was very important, 18% somewhat important, 6% not too important, 7% not important, and 1% did not know. 51% attended religious services at least once a week, 23% once or twice a month, or a few times a year, 24 % seldom or never, and 1% did not know. 67 % of this cohort pray at least daily, 66% feel spiritual peace, 44 read the Bible at least once a week, 75% believe in heaven, and 37% consider there are specific standards for what is right or wrong, while 59% deem that right or wrong depends on the situation.<sup>113</sup>

### **The Baby Boomers**

Baby boomers were born between 1944 and 1964. Famous faces are Bill Clinton, George Bush, Elton John, Oprah Winfrey, Madonna, George Clooney, and Barack Obama. They're current between 57-77 years old and represented 76 million in the U.S. as of 2019. "There were lots and lots of new-born babies in the mid- the too late forties. Most were either planned or allowed to happen, but there were also many surprises and unwanted pregnancies. The country was in a triumphant mood, and young adults had lots

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<sup>113</sup> "Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics." Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Last modified September 19, 2018. Accessed August 13, 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/silent/>.

of pent-up tension to release at a time when methods of birth control were limited and unreliable.”<sup>114</sup>

In 1946, Fortune magazine declared the start of the Great American Boom, a “boom not just in fertility, but also in economics, education, housing, and science. The robust achievements and optimism of that era left a lasting mark on children.”<sup>115</sup>

This large generation grew up in the unrestrained decades of the 1960s and 1970s and is responsible for a profound cultural transformation in the country. “Baby Boomers have long been the focus of debate about moral values and the tone they set for this country—controversial from the time they were in youthful rebellion right down to the more recent crisis of the Clinton presidency.”<sup>116</sup> “You build it up, mother, we gonna tear it down,” was Jacob Brackman’s motto for his BOOM GENERATION, then triggering America’s most furious and violent youth upheaval of the twentieth century.”<sup>117</sup>

The other two variables of the epoch were the sexual revolution and the postmodern mindset. Strauss and Neil Howe assert:

Within the Boom, the “sexual revolution” was more a women’s than a men’s movement. Comparing the 1970s with the 1950s, one survey showed Boomer men with only a 3 percent increase in sexual activity over what the Silent did at like age. Similarly, the proportion of male youths experiencing premarital sex rose only slightly from the Silent to Boom eras. By contrast, Boomer women doubled the rate of premarital sex over the Silent (from 41 percent to 81 percent)

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<sup>114</sup> Feeney, Paul. “Baby Boomer Generation - a Lifetime of Memories” (The History Press Ltd, 2015) 21-22

<sup>115</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe “*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*” (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 302

<sup>116</sup> Roof Clark, “*Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion*” (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999) 13-14

<sup>117</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe “*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*” (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 299

and tripled their relative propensity to commit adultery (from one-fourth to three-fourths of the rate for men).<sup>118</sup>

Regarding secularization, the change was so dipped, and the generational gap so drastic that during the 1960s, Time Magazine published “Is God Dead?” Secularization deeply affected western society. In the 70s, large churches started losing their members on is large scale. Paulien affirms: “A secular person is someone that lives with little or no reference to God or religious practice on a daily basis. Being a secular person usually is not a conscious decision; the majority of secular people are not atheists. The typical secular person may not be hostile towards religion but is someone that doesn’t practice most of the religious traditions such as reading the Bible, praying, or attending worship.”<sup>119</sup>

The study of the Pew Research Center in September 2018 also emphasized the religious composition of the Baby boomers. The study showed that 84% defined themselves as Christians, 3% as Non-Christian Faiths, and 13% as Unaffiliated (religious “none”). The study also specified that 77% of them believe in God (absolutely certain), 14% believe in God (fairly certain), and 3% believe in God (not too/not at all certain). Only 5% said they do not believe in God, while 1% stated that they did not know.

When asked about the importance of religions in their lives, 68% said it was very important, 19% somewhat important, 6% not too important, 6% not important, and 1% did not know. 44% attended religious services at least once a week, 33% once or twice a

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<sup>118</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe “*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*” (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 299.

<sup>119</sup> Paulien, Jon “*Everlasting Gospel, Ever - Changing World*” (Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2008) 27.

month, or a few times a year, 22 % went seldom or never, and 1% did not know. 68 % of this cohort pray at least daily, 68% feel spiritual peace, 49 read the Bible at least once a week, 78% believe in heaven, and 41% consider there are specific standards for what is right or wrong, while 56% deem that right or wrong depends on the situation.<sup>120</sup>

## Gen X

Gen Xers are the generation born between 1965-1980 (Sometimes listed as 1965-1979). “The name “Generation X” comes from a novel by Douglas Coupland, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, published in 1991.”<sup>121</sup> Famous Gen Xers are Michael Jordan, Paula Abdul, Charles Barkley, Tiger Woods, and Jeff Bezos, founder of amazon.com. No member of this generation has served so far as president of the USA.

Like the silent generation, Gen X has been described as an “in-between” generation. A sandwich among the baby boomers and the millennials in terms of social and political power. Gen X accounts for just 16% of the nation’s wealth, while baby boomers hold more than half (56%), an analysis of Federal Reserve data by economist Gray Kimbrough shows. In 2008, at a median age of 35, Gen Xers owned just 9% of the nation’s wealth, less than half of what baby boomers had when they were 35.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> “Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics.” Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Last modified September 19, 2018. Accessed August 13, 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/baby-boomer/region/south/>.

<sup>121</sup> Julia Kagan. “Generation X (Gen X).” Investopedia. Investopedia, June 22, 2020. Last modified June 22, 2020. Accessed August 14, 2020. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/generation-x-genx.asp>.

<sup>122</sup> Julia Kagan, “Generation X (Gen X).” Investopedia. Investopedia, June 22, 2020. Last modified June 22, 2020. Accessed August 14, 2020. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/generation-x-genx.asp>.

This generation has been one of the most affected in terms of family values. “During the Gen-X child era, the American family endured countless new movements and trends—feminism, sexual freedom, a divorce epidemic, fewer G-rated movies, child-raising handbooks telling parents to “consider yourself” ahead of a child’s needs, gay rights, Chappaquiddick, film nudity, a Zero Population Growth ethic, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, and *Roe v. Wade*. A prominent academic in 1969 proclaimed in the *Washington Post* that the family needed “a decent burial.”<sup>123</sup>

According to Strauss and Howe, “The 13<sup>th</sup> (Gen X) is the most aborted generation in American history. After rising sharply during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the abortion rate climbed by another 80 percent during the first six years (1973 to 1979) after the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision. Through the birth years of last-wave 13ers, would-be mothers aborted one fetus in three.”<sup>124</sup>

Subsequently, the authors add:

In 1962, half of all adult women believed that parents in bad marriages should stay together for the sake of the children; by 1980, only one in five thought so. A 13er child in the 1980s faced twice the risk of parental divorce as a Boomer child in the mid-1960s—and three times the risk a Silent child faced back in 1950. Four-fifths of today’s divorced adults profess to be happier afterward, but a majority of their children feel otherwise.<sup>125</sup>

As a workforce, generation X has done a lot to improve the workplace; they introduced the notion of a stable work-life balance. Gen Xers watched the Silent

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<sup>123</sup> Neil Howe, and William Strauss. *“Millennials Rising: the next Great Generation”* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006.) 307.

<sup>124</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe *“The History of America’s Future 1584 to 2069”* (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 299.

<sup>125</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe *“The History of America’s Future 1584 to 2069.”*

Generation, and Baby Boomers turn into workaholics in a workforce that encouraged long hours and a hard grind. Instead of adopting this mindset, Gen X professionals instead sought a balance of work and life.<sup>126</sup>

Regarding technology, gen x are immigrants, but they can do very well especially the last wave. Gen Xers were not raised with the internet, but they did have access to it in their careers. The lack of internet and tech tools positively affected how they conduct business and form relationships in their early lives. As a result, Gen Xers can make stronger connections and collaborate more naturally in the workplace.<sup>127</sup>

The study of the Pew Research Center in September 2018 likewise stressed the religious composition of the Gen Xers. The study showed that 70% defined themselves as Christians, 6% as Non-Christian Faiths, 23% as Unaffiliated (religious “none”), and 1% did not know. The study also avowed that 64% of them believe in God (absolutely certain), 20% believe in God (fairly certain), and 5% believe in God (not too/not at all certain). 9% said they do not believe in God, while 2% stated that they did not know.

When asked about the importance of religions in their lives, 53% said it was very important, 25% somewhat important, 11% not too important, and 11% not necessary. 34% attended religious services at least once a week, 35% once or twice a month, or a few times a year, 31 % went seldom or never, and 1% did not know. 56 % of this cohort pray at least daily, 58% feel spiritual peace, 36 read the Bible at least once a week, 72%

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<sup>126</sup> Fabiano, Kyle Schnitzer and Jennifer. “These Are the 5 Main Generation X Characteristics You See in the Workplace.” Ladders. Ladders, August 13, 2020. Last modified August 13, 2020. Accessed August 14, 2020. <https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/these-are-generation-x-characteristics-in-the-office-and-their-new-label>.

<sup>127</sup> Fabiano, Kyle Schnitzer and Jennifer. “These Are the 5 Main Generation X Characteristics You See in the Workplace.”



believe in heaven, and 35% consider there are specific standards for what is right or wrong, while 63% deem that right or wrong depends on the situation.<sup>128</sup>

## **Millennials**

Anyone born between 1981 and 1996 is considered a Millennial. To begin studying at what might be unique about the next cohort; Pew Research Center decided to use 1996 as the last birth year for this cohort. Millennials are a highly values-driven generation. They were taught that every voice matter and that justice is worth fighting.<sup>129</sup>

Howe and Strauss prophesized in 2006 about them: “As a group, Millennials are unlike any other youth generation in living memory. They are more numerous, more affluent, better educated, and more ethnically diverse. More important, they are beginning to manifest a wide array of positive social habits that older Americans no longer associate with youth, including a new focus on teamwork, achievement, modesty, and good conduct.”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> “Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics.” Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Last modified September 19, 2018. Accessed August 14, 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/generation-x/>.

<sup>129</sup> Michael, Dimock. “Defining Generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins.” Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center, July 28, 2020. Last modified July 28, 2020. Accessed August 16, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>.

<sup>130</sup> Howe, Neil, and William Strauss. “Millennials Rising: the next Great Generation” (New York: Vintage Books, 2006) 13-14.

According to the Cut, the world's five most powerful millennials now, are "Jared Kushner (b. 1981), Kim Jong-un (b. 1984), Mark Zuckerberg (b. 1984), Stephen Miller (b. 1985), and Mohammed bin Salman (b. 1985)."<sup>131</sup>

Other celebrities of the group are Serena Williams, Ivanka Trump, Kristen Stewart, Cristiano Ronaldo, and Lionel Messi. "Millennials are so named because they were born near, or came of age during, the 21st century's dawn – the new millennium. As the first generation to be born into a digital world, members of this group are considered "digital natives." Technology is an inner part of their everyday lives. It's been estimated that they check their phones as many as 150 times a day<sup>132</sup>

Researchers Thom S. Rainer and Jess W. say about Millennials:

The Millennial Generation may well be the most connected generation to their parents. Six out of ten Millennials look to their parents for advice and guidance. These 60 percent also told us that they receive a lot of advice from moms and dads. The majority of Millennials are not calling a parent just to talk. Millennials are calling parents to find out how to handle a disruptive coworker or how to approach the bank about a loan. Millennials want parental input about future career plans. This generation seeks the wisdom of their parents.<sup>133</sup>

According to the same researchers in terms of finances, millennials are feeling the effects of a consumer society when it comes to financial matters as well. They underline:

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<sup>131</sup> Malone, Noreen. "The Five Millennials (Actually) Changing the World." The Cut. The Cut, September 3, 2019. Last modified September 3, 2019. Accessed August 16, 2020. <https://www.thecut.com/2019/09/five-millennials-changing-the-world.html>.

<sup>132</sup> James, Chen, "Millennials: Finances, Investing, and Retirement." Investopedia. Investopedia, July 16, 2020. Last modified July 16, 2020. Accessed August 16, 2020. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/millennial.asp>.

<sup>133</sup> Rainer, Thom S. Rainer, and Jess W. Rainer. "The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation" (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Pub. Group, 2011) 67.

“Saving for retirement no longer means simply opening an account at the bank. Now there are options. Do you choose to place your money in a 401(k) or an IRA? What type of IRA: traditional or Roth? Do you make investment decisions yourself, or do you pay someone to assist you? If you choose to have an investment advisor, which financial institution is the best?”<sup>134</sup> The point is that with so many choices and conflicting advice, millennials do not know where to begin financially.

The analysis of the Pew Research Center in September 2018 also underlined the religious composition of younger millennials, ages 18-29. The study showed that 56% defined themselves as Christians, 8% as Non-Christian Faiths, and 36% as Unaffiliated (religious “none”). The study also avowed that 50% of them believe in God (absolutely certain), 21% believe in God (fairly certain), and 9% believe in God (not too/not at all certain). 17% said they do not believe in God, while 3% stated that they did not know.

When asked about the importance of religions in their lives, 38% said it was very important, 29% somewhat important, 17% not too important, and 16% not important. 28% attended religious services at least once a week, 38% once or twice a month, or a few times a year, 34 % went seldom or never. 39 % of this cohort prays at least daily, 49% feel spiritual peace, and 25 read the Bible at least once a week. 68% believe in heaven, and 21% consider there are specific standards for what is right or wrong, while 78% suppose that right or wrong depends on the situation.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Rainer, Thom S. Rainer, and Jess W. Rainer. “The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation” (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Pub. Group, 2011) 87.

<sup>135</sup> “Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics.” Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Last modified September 19, 2018. Accessed August 14, 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/generation-x/>.

The Gallup Poll adds that only 42% of millennials frequent church. It is the lowest generational percentage. Traditionalists come in at 68%, which is down from 77% in 2000. They observe that one way to reach millennials is by engaging them; they want to be involved and become productive participants in their local communities. Churches who want to reach this demographic may also need to invest in newer technology and online strategies<sup>136</sup>

### **Generation Z**

Generation Z (aka Gen Z, iGen, centennials, Selfie Generation, Post-Millennials, the App Generation, or TransGeneration) refers to the group born between 1997-2010. “Most Gen Zers plan to get married, have children and buy a home—although probably later than previous generations. And they are less likely to drink, smoke, and take drugs. Yet they hold more progressive views on issues like the legality of marijuana and the morality of same-sex marriage.”<sup>137</sup> It is the largest and most ethnically diverse generation in American history. They represent the leading edge of the country’s changing racial and ethnic makeup.

A bare majority (52%) are non-Hispanic white – significantly smaller than the share of Millennials who were non-Hispanic white in 2002 (61%). One-in-four Gen Zers are Hispanic, 14% are black, 6% are Asian, and 5% are some other races or two or more races. In some regions of the U.S., Gen Z has already crossed this threshold. In the West, only 40% of Gen Zers are non-Hispanic white. Just as many are Hispanic, while 4% are black, 10% are Asian, and 6% are some other race. In the South, 46% of Gen Zers are non-Hispanic white. Minority

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<sup>136</sup> Jodee, Thomas Costello, Ken Kroohs, Ambani Ndou, and Lynda Turner. “14 Church Statistics You Need to Know For 2020.” REACHRIGHT. Last modified June 25, 2020. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://reachrightstudios.com/church-statistics-2020/>.

<sup>137</sup> Posted December 8, 2016 by Sean McDowell and filed under the categories Relationships. “9 Important Insights about Generation Z.” Josh.org. Last modified May 12, 2020. Accessed August 21, 2020. [https://www.josh.org/9-important-insights-generation-z/?mwm\\_id=314044355904](https://www.josh.org/9-important-insights-generation-z/?mwm_id=314044355904).

representation is lowest in the Midwest, where more than two-thirds of Gen Zers (68%) are non-Hispanic whites.<sup>138</sup>

Gen Z grew up with technology, the internet, and social media, which sometimes causes them to be stereotyped as tech-addicted, anti-social, or social justice warriors.<sup>139</sup>

According to a 2018 Pew Research Center survey, 95% of 13- to 17-year-olds have access to a smartphone, and a similar share (97%) uses at least one of seven major online platforms. YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat are among teens' favorite online destinations. Some 85% say they use YouTube, 72% use Instagram, and 69% use Snapchat. Facebook is less popular with teens – 51% say they use this social media site. Some 45% of teens say they are online “almost constantly,” and an additional 44% say they’re online several times a day. Some researchers have suggested that the growing amount of time teens are spending on their mobile devices, and specifically on social media, is contributing to the growth in anxiety and depression among this group.<sup>140</sup>

Partnering with Qualtrics Panels, researcher Melissa Deckman collected survey data from more than 2,200 Gen Z Americans in late July 2019 as part of a more extensive study on this emerging generation’s political behavior. She indicates that Although not a purely random sample, it is designed to represent the adult Gen Z population in the United States based on gender, race, and region. Also, the data were weighted to match Pew Research Center benchmarks for sex, race/ethnicity, and family income, so it closely resembles the U.S. public’s demographic make up for the age demographic under study.

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<sup>138</sup> May 14, 2020, and Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik. “What We Know About Gen Z So Far.” *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project*. Last modified May 15, 2020. Accessed August 19, 2020. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far/>.

<sup>139</sup> “Generation Z: Latest Gen Z News, Research, Facts & Strategies.” *Business Insider*. *Business Insider*, n.d. Accessed August 19, 2020. <https://www.businessinsider.com/generation-z>.

<sup>140</sup> May 14, 2020, and Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik. “What We Know About Gen Z So Far.” *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project*. Last modified May 15, 2020. Accessed August 19, 2020. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far/>.

What she found in terms of the religiosity of the Gen Zers is interesting. She asserts: “When it comes to attendance at religious services, Gen Z Americans are far more likely to skip church than attend regularly. Overall, I find that 45 percent of Gen Z Americans rarely report or never attending church while just 1 in 4 reports attending weekly or more.”<sup>141</sup>

Deckman recognizes that church attendance has historically differed concerning race and gender, so here is a follow- up.

Among my respondents, African Americans report having the highest rates of weekly church attendance, which tracks with other research showing that African Americans attend church more frequently than other groups... Church attendance among the Latinos who are Generation Z more closely resembles the church attendance patterns of white Gen Zers, rather than African American Gen Zers, which is consistent with other studies of religious commitment among Americans. Finally, Gen Z men are slightly *more* likely to report attending church more frequently than Gen Z women, though this difference is only marginally significant ( $p < .10$ ). This finding is notable, however, because women have always been more religious than men, so Gen Z appears to be bucking this historical trend. Why this might be the case is unclear.<sup>142</sup>

Barna calls Gen Z the “first truly ‘post-Christian’ generation” and has found that most previous generations had a “basic education on the Bible and Christianity”—but not Gen Z.<sup>143</sup> Another research by the Barna Group, explains that Gen Z’s ties to religion seem weaker than Millennials: They are more likely to identify as atheist or agnostic (21

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<sup>141</sup> Melissa Deckman. “Generation Z and Religion: What New Data Show.” Religion in Public. Last modified February 7, 2020. Accessed August 20, 2020. <https://religioninpublic.blog/2020/02/10/generation-z-and-religion-what-new-data-show/>.

<sup>142</sup> Melissa Deckman. “Generation Z and Religion: What New Data Show.” Religion in Public. Last modified February 7, 2020. Accessed August 20, 2020. <https://religioninpublic.blog/2020/02/10/generation-z-and-religion-what-new-data-show/>.

<sup>143</sup> Axis. “Strengths and Weaknesses of Generation Z: Parent's Guide.” Strengths and Weaknesses of Generation Z | Parent's Guide. Accessed August 21, 2020. [https://info.axis.org/gen-z-parents?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI3YaR5ZW6wIVkIVCh20EAsaEAAYAiAAEgKIh\\_D\\_BwE](https://info.axis.org/gen-z-parents?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI3YaR5ZW6wIVkIVCh20EAsaEAAYAiAAEgKIh_D_BwE).

percent vs. 15 percent), and most think church attendance is unimportant. “For Gen Z, “atheist” is no longer a dirty word: The percentage of teens who identify as such is double that of the general population (13% vs. 6% of all adults). The proportion that identifies as Christian likewise drops from generation to generation. Three out of four Boomers are Protestant or Catholic Christians (75%), while just three in five 13- to 18-year-olds say they are some Christian (59%).”<sup>144</sup>

### **New opportunities for all generations**

Church attendance is each day more challenging. Every generation has its reasons; some are dying, aging, or are more secular. The bottom line is that fewer people are connecting with the teaching of the Bible. It is critical since faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).

Non-attendance is affecting all generations. Emba Christine wrote in the Washington Post:

At the Pew Research Center, studies tracking America’s religious landscape found that although religious beliefs and practice have been declining at a rapid pace for people of all ages, the drop-off has been most pronounced among people ages 23 to 38. In 2019, roughly two-thirds attended worship services “a few times a year” or less, and 4 in 10 say they seldom or never go. A decade ago, it was more than half and only 3 in 10, respectively.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Barna, “Atheism Doubles Among Generation Z” Barna Group, January 24, 2018, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.barna.com/research/atheism-doubles-among-generation-z/>.

<sup>145</sup> Emba, Christine. “Opinion | Why Millennials Are Skipping Church and Not Going Back.” The Washington Post, WP Company, 28 Oct. 2019, [www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-millennials-are-skipping-church-and-not-going-back/2019/10/27/0d35b972-f777-11e9-8cf0-4cc99f74d127\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-millennials-are-skipping-church-and-not-going-back/2019/10/27/0d35b972-f777-11e9-8cf0-4cc99f74d127_story.html).

When you explore other data, like Gallup, they also affirm that it is easy to see a trend in the decline of religious preference as each generation has grown into adulthood.

Traditionalists, which are the oldest generation polled, came in with the highest religious preference of 89%. This means most traditionalists had a set religion. Of course, organized religion was far more prevalent in this generation. These numbers start to drop slightly with the baby boomer generation. While 84% of them had a religious preference, it is still a decline. Generation X drops slightly more to 79%, with millennials dropping to just 68%. The broader availability of denominations and non-denominational churches are likely part of the reason. Plus, younger generations do not always engage in the same way as their older counterparts. Offering something for all ages helps to prevent generational gaps in religion.<sup>146</sup>

A church that keeps faithful to the Bible, reflecting Jesus to the people, and not their ideas, is the key. Barna did fascinating research about the increasing group that proclaims to love Jesus, but not the church. Probably they are talking about structures, buildings, and traditions since it is true this society has made antibodies for religions.

"We live in an increasingly secular American culture. Religion is in retreat from the public square, and traditional institutions like the church are no longer functioning with the cultural authority they once held in generations past. Today, nearly half of America is unchurched. However, even though more and more Americans are abandoning the institutional church and its defined boundary markers of religious identity, many still believe in God and practice faith outside its walls".<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Jodee, Thomas Costello, Ken Kroohs, Ambani Ndou, and Lynda Turner. "14 Church Statistics You Need to Know For 2020." REACHRIGHT. Last modified June 25, 2020. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://reachrightstudios.com/church-statistics-2020/>.

<sup>147</sup> "Meet Those Who 'Love Jesus but Not the Church.'" Barna Group, [www.barna.com/research/meet-love-jesus-not-church/](http://www.barna.com/research/meet-love-jesus-not-church/).



There is a vast difference between the traditional postmodern and the secular postmodern. The secular postmodern is 'very spiritual,' takes time for private meditation, and enjoys contemporary worship and meetings of praise in homes, so long as they are not required to provide a long-term commitment. They are determined to cultivate a personal relationship with God for themselves, without religious institutions or moral mandates. They are in charge of their own spiritual life. <sup>148</sup>

This research holds that all generations are ready to benefit from a new approach in which a myriad of Jesus' center technology-based, small congregations allow everybody to listen once again the true gospel.

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<sup>148</sup> Jon Paulien, *“Everlasting Gospel, Ever - Changing World”* (Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2008), 28 – 32.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **HISTORICAL IMPACT OF CHURCH PLANTING IN THE SDA CHURCH**

#### *Historical Context*

*What has been the church planting methodology's historical impact on the  
Seventh-day Adventist church's growth?*

The SDA church began as a missionary movement, which explains its worldwide expansion in about one hundred years. SDAs identify themselves with the three angels of Revelation 14: 6-13, which fly in the mid of heaven preaching the eternal gospel. Their fundamental belief number thirteen, The Remnant and its Mission, declares:

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Dan. 7:9-14; Isa. 1:9; 11:11; Jer. 23:3; Mic. 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> "The Remnant and Its Mission." *Adventist.org*. Last modified November 21, 2019. Accessed September 13, 2020. <https://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental-beliefs/church/the-remnant-and-its-mission/>.

This compelling belief pushed the Adventist missionaries to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Church planting was at the forefront of that mission. James Springer White, a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and husband of Ellen G. White, often called the apostle Paul of the Adventist movement, commenting on the impact of church planting as it relates to pastors declared:

In no way can a preacher so well prove himself as in entering new fields. There he can see the fruits of his labors. And if he is successful in raising up churches, and establishing them, so that they bear good fruits, he gives to his brethren, the best proof that he is sent of the Lord... If they cannot raise churches and friends to sustain them, then certainly the cause of truth has no need of them, and they have the best reasons for concluding that they made a sad mistake when they thought that God called them to teach the third angel's message.<sup>150</sup>

This passion for multiplication generated such a powerful movement that the Seventh-day Adventist Church membership grew sevenfold during its first quarter-century. "In place of an estimated 3,500 church members when the General Conference was organized in 1863, there were 26,112 by mid-1888. These were spread over thirty-two local Conferences and five mission fields and organized into 901 churches." As you can see, the average per church was about 29 people, which evidence a movement of small congregations rapidly multiplying.

The growth was so fast that in 1901 the Church had 74,500 more members than in 1863. It also jumped from the original six local Conferences to fifty-seven, plus forty-one missions scattered in every significant part of the world except China.

Richard W. Schwarz adds:

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<sup>150</sup> James White. "Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald, Vol. 19, No. 20, April 15, 1862." - Ellen G. White Writings. Accessed September 17, 2020. <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/1684.5465>.

From 1885 onward, Seventh-day Adventist mission activities expanded dramatically. To some extent, Adventists reflected the general Protestant interest in foreign missions at this time. Stirred by men like Dwight L. Moody and John R. Mott, hundreds of American youths pledged to carry the gospel to earth's remotest corners; to evangelize the world "in this generation." Adventists had their particular promoters of missions, none more influential than S. N. Haskell and Ellen White. These two wrote and spoke with the conviction of firsthand witnesses to the challenge and opportunities of distant lands. In 1882 Haskell made his first visit to Europe. Three years later, he pioneered the advent message in Australia and New Zealand."<sup>151</sup>

God continued to bless the church, and the membership rose from 78,000 in 1901 to more than 576,000 in 1945. Schwarz affirms that the decades of 1920 saw the church expand nearly four times from about 2,500 congregations to more than 10,000 in 1930.<sup>152</sup>

In 1921 Adventists reached a milestone when the number of members in the world fields surpassed the membership in North America. By 1945 the combined membership in the non-North American fields amounted to 63 percent of the church. By itself, North America was still four times larger than the next division, Inter-America, but the momentum of membership growth had long since shifted to regions outside the United States and Canada.<sup>153</sup>

According to the Annual Statistical Report 2020 of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, it grew from 88,718 churches and 74,843 companies worldwide in 2018 to 91,140 churches and 72,605 companies in 2019. It means 2,422 churches more and 2,238 companies less, which represents a net gain of 184 congregations.<sup>154</sup>

This vision of planting churches in new territories is congruent with the writings of Ellen White, prophet and founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She wrote in

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<sup>151</sup> Richard W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant: Denominational History Textbook for Seventh-Day Adventist College Classes*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Association, 1979) 569

<sup>152</sup> Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant: Denominational History Textbook for Seventh-Day Adventist College Classes*, 579

<sup>153</sup> Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant: Denominational History Textbook for Seventh-Day Adventist College Classes*, 428

<sup>154</sup> *Adventist World Statistics*. Accessed August 31, 2020. <https://www.adventiststatistics.org/>.

1899: “We should seek in every place to raise a company of believers who will unite with us in uplifting the standard of truth, and working for rich and poor. Then as churches are established, there will be an increase of helpers to labor for the destitute and the outcast.”<sup>155</sup> She also penned: “It is the Lord’s desire that renewed efforts shall be put forth in many places, and small plants be established. A work is to be done that is to open the way for the advancement of the truth, and that will increase the faith of souls.”<sup>156</sup>

This method of keep planting new churches has been a blessing to the SDA church. This thesis endorses the assertion raised in 1990 by C. Peter Wagner in his book *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*, that: “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”<sup>157</sup>

### **Early Missionary and Clerical Philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventists**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church started in the United States of America as an amend of the 1844 Millerite Movement. The first organized group of churches was the Michigan Conference, structured on October 6, 1861, by the election of a chairman, a secretary, and an executive committee of three, according to historian J.N. Loughborough, who from 1865-1868, served as president.

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<sup>155</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*. (Washington Review & Herald, 1948) 436.

<sup>156</sup> Ellen G. White, *Ministry to the Cities*. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 2012) 145.

<sup>157</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*. Third Edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2004), 24

Despite the strong resistance, in the late 1840s and early 1850s, to establish a new institution that could become Babylon, seven Conferences were already organized by October 1862. As Loughborough unfold the facts of those early days in the Church's organization, he mentions something remarkable as he asserts:

The following classes of rulers and officers of the Christian church are brought to view in the New Testament: apostles, evangelists, elders, bishops, pastors, and deacons. These we would divide into two great classes: those who hold their office by virtue of an especial call from God and those selected by the Church: the former embracing apostles and evangelists; and the latter, elders, bishops, pastors, and deacons. "Apostles is from the word Apostolos and signifies one sent forth, a messenger. It is used to designate in a pre-eminent sense the twelve apostles sent out by Christ, but it cannot be confined to them nor to that age. Evangelists...In the New Testament, an evangelist is a preacher of the gospel, not fixed in any place, but traveling as a missionary to preach the gospel and establish churches.' See Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2Tim.4:5.<sup>158</sup>

This statement is significant because it framed the ecclesiastical philosophy that would drive the Adventist church's unprecedented evangelistic growth in the USA and the world. "Protestant churches hired ministers to serve already-established churches as their pastor. Adventists did not. Early Adventist leaders decided that the best way to fulfill our mission was to spend the tithe for salaries of full-time workers who would be evangelists (win souls) and church planters (establish new churches).<sup>159</sup>

In the early days of the Adventist church, using the Biblical plan for ministry as outlined in the New Testament, our denominational growth rate was tremendous. Other denominations wondered how we grew so fast. We had an unpopular doctrine, an unpopular day of worship, and many difficulties that other churches

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<sup>158</sup>J.N. Loughborough. "The Church: Its Organization, Order and Discipline." Accessed September 2, 2020. <http://www.adventaudio.org/ebooks/files/pdf/Loughborough - The Church, its Organization, Order and Discipline.pdf>.

<sup>159</sup> Ron Gladden. "Evangelism and Church Planting." *Ministry Magazine*. Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1999/10/evangelism-and-church-planting>.

did not have, and yet we were growing more rapidly than any of them. The reason we were growing so fast was simple. The elders were taking care of the existing churches, which gave the gospel ministers the ability to enter cities and areas with no Adventist presence and plant new churches. The existing churches could evangelize in the areas where they were located, under the direction of the elders. The Holy Spirit took care of the existing churches by using the elders as pastors, and Christ became their minister as the elders and members labored for souls.<sup>160</sup>

SDAs committed to following the New Testament model of mission, based in the priesthood of all believers. They refused to have settled pastors over their local churches. “Instead of using such pastors, Adventist pioneers opted to have established churches be run by local leaders while reserving most salaries for clergy starting new churches in new areas—that is, for clergy fulfilling an apostolic function. So pervasive was this policy that as late as 1909, the Adventist Church was still organized in this way globally (*Seventh-day Adventists and Seventh-day Baptists*, 1909).”<sup>161</sup>

Only apostles and evangelists (church planters) were recognized as itinerant officers of the Church. The deacons, elders, and pastors were appointed by the local churches as lay leaders to care and nurture the newly planted churches. According to J. N. Loughborough, the said Adventist pioneer, which book, *The Church: Its Organization, Order, and Discipline*, published in 1907, served as a reference for the Church

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<sup>160</sup> *Who Will Provide Pastoral Care for the Existing Churches?* Accessed September 4, 2020. <http://1844toeternity.com/book/who-will-provide-pastoral-care-for-the-existing-churches/>.

<sup>161</sup> Shane N. Anderson “Reducing Pastor-Dependency in the New Market Seventh-Day ...” Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1319&context=dmin>.

management until an official Manual was adopted in 1932, elders, episcopos, and pastors are one same office. He asserts:<sup>162</sup>

That elders and bishops are identical, is also shown from Acts 20:17, 28. The word elders in verse 17 is from presbuteros, and the word overseers in verse 28 is from episcopos (bishop). The term pastor is from poimen and signifies literally a herdsman, a shepherd, especially a pastor, a teacher, a spiritual guide of a particular church. The definition of this term shows that it signifies the same office as presbuteros (elder), and episcopos (bishop), a local office confined to a particular church.<sup>163</sup>

Russell Burrill, an expert in the topic, explains: “The amazing thing is that early Adventism regarded the pastoral role as a local lay position and not a clergy position. The result was that they developed a system where the clergy were primarily church planters and evangelists. Once planted, local churches were taught to care for themselves, while the clergy were free to continue planting new churches. Local churches were trusted to local, unpaid lay elders”.<sup>164</sup>

Dr. Burrill continues:

Thus, for the first fifty to sixty years of its history, the Adventist church existed without “settled pastors” over churches. Even the denomination’s largest church, in Battle Creek, operated without a paid pastor. James White did serve as a pastor for a few years, but at the same time, he was also the president of the General Conference, head of the publishing work, and in charge of the medical work. His

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<sup>162</sup> Wesley McDonald, *Let my Pastors Go* (USA: Self-published, S/D) 40. Also, as From 1844 to Eternity. Accessed September 16, 2020. <http://1844toeternity.com/>.

<sup>163</sup> J.N. Loughborough. “The Church: Its Organization, Order and Discipline.” Accessed September 2, 2020. <http://www.adventaudio.org/ebooks/files/pdf/Loughborough - The Church, its Organization, Order and Discipline.pdf>, p.129.

<sup>164</sup> Russell Burrill, *Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement*. (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1999) 50



work as a pastor was his contribution to the local church where he belonged. In other words, he served as the local elder in charge of pastoring the church.<sup>165</sup>

Churches sent their tithe to local Conferences to fund the clergy who were planting new churches. One significant difference between apostles - evangelists and elders - pastors was that apostles were itinerant leaders while elders were local church leaders. "Apostles traveled from church to church, established new churches, and oversaw the operation of the churches. Elders, however, were connected to a local church and had no authority over other churches. Yet apostles and elders worked closely together in giving leadership to the church."<sup>166</sup>

Kurt W. Johnson quoting C. Mervyn Maxwell, refers to an interview that a reporter made to Adventist preacher G. B. Starr, a famous evangelist during the 1870s, 80, 90s., during an evangelistic campaign, that sheds light on the Adventist model of ministry in its beginnings.

The reporter asked Starr by what means the Adventists had multiplied so fast. His answer: "We have not settled pastor. Our churches are taught eagerly to take care of themselves, while nearly all our ministers work as evangelists in new fields. In the winter, they go out into the churches, hall, or schoolhouse and raise believers. In the

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<sup>165</sup> Russell Burrill, *Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement*, 502

<sup>166</sup> Gerard, P. Damsteegt, "Have Adventists Abandoned the Biblical Model of Leadership of the Local Church?" (2005). Faculty Publications. Paper 60. Accessed September 2, 2020. <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/church-history-pubs/60>, p.647

summer, we use tents, pitching them in the cities, villages where we teach the people these doctrines. This year we shall run about 100 tents in this way.”<sup>167</sup>

We might not use the same methods today, but the principle is the same, an involved and empowered laity. The priesthood of all believers must become the norm once again. We must also find a way to connect with the old paths in a renewed zeal of discipleship, evangelism, and intentional multiplication of God’s kingdom.

### **Settling Pastors**

Until 1883 ministers were mostly involved in evangelism; however, due to pressures and disagreements, in 1882, the General Conference appointed three church leaders, W.H. Littlejohn, J.O. Corliss, and H.A. St. John, to prepare a manual. They did it and suggested that the Conferences might employ ministers who were not able to do evangelistic work but who confined their ministry to existing churches.

In this context, the manual spoke of two classes of ministers. Regarding the first class, to which most of the ministers belonged, it said, “There is found in the Christian church in our age a class of ministers who, though particularly successful in raising up churches in new fields, are of but little use to those churches after they have once been fully indoctrinated.” About the second class, it stated, “There are those who seem especially adapted to act the part of pastors of churches already brought into existence. The latter would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to succeed in that which might be called purely evangelistic work.” The manual recommended that conferences keep this distinction in mind, so both classes of ministers might be used. “Those who have the oversight of conferences, therefore, would do well to recognize this distinction, as it would

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<sup>167</sup> Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups: from Theory to Reality*. (Review and Herald Pub. Association, 2011) 165

enable them to utilize the labor of both of these classes of preachers, by assigning to each his proper work.”<sup>168</sup>

At the General Conference session of November 1883, the Executive Committee, joined by a committee of ten appointed by the session, considered the proposal to adopt the church manual that had been already published in the *Review and Herald*. At the end of the deliberations, the group unanimously rejected the proposed church manual. However, the item was not over. It represents indeed the beginning of a trend toward ministers being employed as settled pastors.

Ellen White was strongly opposed to settling pastors. The founder knew that the change of order would not be in the organization’s best interest and gave many rebukes in this sense, but probably what she wrote in the *General Conference Bulletin* on April 12, 1901, is the cherry of the cake. White stressed that the ministers must not keep hovering over the churches, a concept that was commonly used in American English to illustrate someone who is intently supervising something. She stated:

Our ministers are to work on the gospel plan of ministering. It has been presented to me that all through America, there are barren fields. As I traveled through the South on my way to the Conference, I saw city after city that was unworked. What is the matter? The ministers are hovering over churches, which know the truth, while thousands are perishing out of Christ. If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. He would do Christian missionary work. But the churches are dying, and they want a minister to preach to them. They should be taught to bring a faithful tithe to God, that he may strengthen and bless them. They should be brought into working order, that the breath of God may come to them. They should be taught that unless they can

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<sup>168</sup> Damsteegt, P. Gerard, “Have Adventists Abandoned the Biblical Model of Leadership of the Local Church?” 659.

stand alone, without a minister, they need to be converted anew, and baptized anew. They need to be born again.<sup>169</sup>

Leaders as Arthur G. Daniells also raised their voices against the idea of settling pastors. He who had the privilege to be the longest president in the SDA Church and led the reorganization process of 1901-1903 knew it was wrong. At a ministerial meeting in Los Angeles, California, in March 1912, he said:

We have not settled our ministers over churches as pastors to any large extent. In some of the very large churches, we have elected pastors, but as a rule, we have held ourselves ready for field service, evangelistic work, and our brethren and sisters have held themselves ready to maintain their church services and carry forward their church work without settled pastors. And I hope this will never cease to be the order of affairs in this denomination; for when we cease our forward movement work and begin to settle over our churches, to stay by them, and do their thinking and their praying and their work that is to be done, then our churches will begin to weaken, and lose their life and spirit, and become paralyzed and fossilized and our work will be on a retreat.<sup>170</sup>

Despite such statements, after Ellen G. White died in 1915 and the end of Daniels' presidency in 1920, the change in practice eventually came. Within the decade, settled pastorates began to be implemented on a gradual, yet broad scale in the United States and the world.<sup>171</sup>

After the death of the prophetess, the voice that spoke most strongly against the ministers taking control or hovering over local congregations was silent... The appointment of "settled pastors" had a dramatic impact on the leadership role of the elders in the congregation. With the minister as the most important leader in

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<sup>169</sup> Ellen White, The General Conference Bulletin, April 12, 1901, 204. Accessed September 4, 2020. <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1901-01ex09.pdf>

<sup>170</sup> Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups: from Theory to Reality*. (Review and Herald Pub. Association, 2011) 165

<sup>171</sup> Shane N. Anderson "Reducing Pastor-Dependency in the New Market Seventh-Day ..." Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1319&context=dmin>.

the organizational structure of the local church, the church board, after the minister, became the decisive leadership voice responsible for the direction of the local church. Now the influence of the elder was generally reduced to leading out in platform responsibilities, breaking bread at Communion, giving advice to the church board, visiting members, and assisting the local minister. Nearly twenty years after Mrs. White's death, this change of the elders' authority became institutionalized with the official adoption of the first Seventh-day Adventist *Church Manual* in 1932.<sup>172</sup>

As it was stated, the impact of settings pastors was devastating for our mission. According to Burrill, the change of order and philosophy caused a dramatic drop in church planting; in the 1870s, a new church was planted each year for every two ordained ministers. He adds: "In the 1880s, the rate was for every five or six ordained ministers, and in the 1890s, one new church was established every year for every four ordained ministers."<sup>173</sup>

Burrill laments how in the 1990s, more than one hundred and twenty pastors were required to raise one single church each year in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, which includes: The United States, Canada, French possessions of St. Pierre and Miquelon, Bermuda, Guam, Wake Island, Northern Mariana Islands, and three states in free association with the United States - Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

McDonald's puts the numbers in another way, indicating that from 1863 to 1932, 69 years, the number of churches grew by 18.3 times, moving from 125 to

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<sup>172</sup> Gerard, P. Damsteegt, "Have Adventists Abandoned the Biblical Model of Leadership of the Local Church?" 672.

<sup>173</sup> Burrill, Russell. *Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement*, 52.

2,285 congregations. He demonstrates that from 1932 to 2017, 85 years, the number of churches in North America only grew by 2.4 times, it is from 2,285 to 5,561. Also, from 1863 to 1932, the number of members increased by 38.8 times, from 3,500 to 135,837. However, from 1932 to 2017, the number of members grew only 9.2 times, moving from 135,837 to 124,9715 affiliates.<sup>174</sup>

### **A New Church Planting Movement**

After more than sixty years of lethargy, the dawn of church planting finally arrived. It is fair to say that The North American Division Evangelism Institute (NADEI) has played a key role in it. As the institution underscored in their own history and wrote in 2010: “NADEI has been directly responsible for the resurgence of church planting in the North American Division, leading out by establishing the SEEDS Church Planting Conferences which have led to over 1500 churches being planted in the last fourteen years.”<sup>175</sup>

1995 was the year the church in North America hit rock bottom. The number of new churches declined. “As a result, there were leaders in North America—including Russell Burrill (former director of the NAD Evangelism Institute) and others—that started Seeds Church Planting Conferences.”<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Wesley McDonald, *Let my Pastors Go* 49,50.

<sup>175</sup> “History.” North American Division Evangelism Institute. Accessed September 17, 2020. <https://www.nadei.org/about/history>.

<sup>176</sup> “Seeds Church Planting Conference.” North American Division Evangelism Institute. <https://www.nadei.org/nadequipping/church-planting/seeds-church-planting-conference>.

It is critical to say that for that very first SEED Conference in 1996; it was necessary to ask a church-planting expert from another denomination to explain the process to us since the SDA church in North America didn't have anyone ready to train the people. The training presented a challenge; the vision was clear, but the churches and Conferences were not prepared, and a Pandora's box was opened.

In his DMin dissertation: Implementation of a Conference-Wide Church Planting Strategy within the Texas Conference, former NADEI associate, Tom Evans, expands:

With the birth of the North American Division SEEDS Conferences in 1996, there has been a raised awareness and interest in church planting across the division. Unfortunately, many enthusiastic SEEDS attendees would return to their local conference and discover no strategy or support system in place to encourage church planting. A conference pilot project was needed that could provide a model for the division. The project should demonstrate a systematic way of planting numerous churches. A system for ongoing support and development of the church plants would be crucial. Also, these church plants must not simply rearrange the saints through attracting already committed Adventists, but make a significant harvest impact.<sup>177</sup>

According to Evans, it was necessary to pilot a low-cost model. A low-cost model that involves full-time pastors, utilizing their training and experience in ministry. A model that values the local established church, forging a partnership. A model that produces healthy church plants that support the Conference. A model that demonstrates long-term sustainability and growth. A model that enables the rapid expansion of God's

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<sup>177</sup> Evans, Tom L. "Implementation of a Conference-Wide Church Planting Strategy within the Texas Conference," n.d. p. 8-9

work. A model that generates statistical research to encourage other Conferences to engage in church planting that fits the Adventist church's culture.<sup>178</sup>

Evans also asserts that from 2002 to 2010, 114 new churches were planted in the Texas Conference, then he adds:

In 2010, a study was done of the churches that started from 2002 to 2006. The survival rate was 87 percent. This exceeds the average of other denominations, which is 68 percent after four years. Healthy mother churches and consistent, quality coaching contributed to the high survivability. In 2009, new church plants (excluding groups in development) produced \$3,669,548 in tithe and baptized 482 people. Extensive research was conducted by NCD International in Germany of established churches compared to church plants in the Texas Conference. Established churches had a cumulative average score of 50.8, which is slightly above the average of 50, while church plants had a cumulative average score of 66.7. A score above 65 places the level of health in the top 15 percent of all churches surveyed in the United States.

### **NAD Plant a 1000 Initiative**

While SEEDs hold a historical significance, there is today a new movement for church planting in the North American Adventist church. This renewal is seen in multiple coaching and church planting initiatives, training opportunities, resources, and collaboration for the mission.

In 2016, the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists launched Plant1000, what they described as a bold and unprecedented vision of collaboration in church planting. The dynamic José Cortés Jr. was elected to spearhead that great initiative. The program is defined in the following terms:

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<sup>178</sup> Evans, Tom L. "Implementation of a Conference-Wide Church Planting Strategy within the Texas Conference," n.d. p. 8-9



The North American Division, General Conference, Conferences, and Unions will partner with our local churches and invest in helping fund 1000 community churches from 2016 to 2020. Envision 200 Community Church Plants, each year, for the next five years. There are many neighborhoods, towns, and counties in North America that still don't have access to the good news of Jesus. There are people groups in our Division, which are still mostly unreached. These new community church plants will put the gospel within their reach.<sup>179</sup>

As a strategy to complete this task, the NAD would provide unprecedented support and funding to the Conferences that embrace the challenge. The funds set aside to support 200 Community Church Plants per year were \$10,000.00 per Church Plant, in collaboration with the General Conference, Unions, and Conferences (NAD \$2,500 / GC \$2,500 / Union \$2,500 / Conference \$2,500). The goal was that each Conference takes a step of faith and plant four churches every year for the next five years.

The Ministerial Department of the NAD also created the Church Planters Boot Camp, a three-day top of the line equipping experience exclusively for Church Planters, Pastors, Volunteer Lay Pastors, Church Planting Core Teams, and Conference/Union Leaders currently involved in church planting or planning to plant a church between 2016 and 2020. It includes cutting edge training, assessment, coaching, and networking with other Church Planters in North America and the world. A similar vision has been conceived for the five-year period 2020 - 2025.

The benefits of attending include practical teaching on how to plant a church from our best church planters in North America, networking opportunities and experiential learning with other practitioners who are traveling the same journey, and in-depth, direct

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<sup>179</sup> Nadadmin. "Church Plant Bootcamps." *NAD Church Plant 1000*. Last modified January 17, 2020. <http://nadchurchplant.org/71-2/church-planters-boot-camp/>.

information on funding initiatives which can help church planters navigate the first few years of a new missional congregation.

After the launching of the SEEDs program in 1996 and the Plant1000 initiative in 2016, the results are lovely but still tiny in comparison to what it should be.

As of December 2019, the Secretary's Statistical Report of the NAD recounted 5,621 churches and 880 companies for 6,501; previously, as of December 2015, they had already informed 5,483 churches and 845 companies for a total of 6,328.

Comparing 2015 with 2019, the NAD evidence a net growth of 173 churches and companies, corroborating an official increase of 2.66% in five years. It does not include the mission groups, which add around 700 hundred more congregations. In that case, the growth would be about 13%. It implies a multiplication rate of 2.7 per year. We could accurately say that less than 4% of the NAD churches are multiplying.

### **The GNYC Church Planting Journey**

The Greater New York Conference of SDA was established on January 1, 1902, to proclaim the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The Institution was organized in response to Ellen White's prophetic advice, and it is called to be a Conference that advances like a burning lamp. In this regard, she wrote:

“While in New York in the winter of 1901, I received light regarding the work in that great city. Night after night, the course that our brethren should pursue passed before me. In Greater New York, the message is to go forth as a lamp that burns ... New York is

ready to be worked. In that great city, the message of truth will be given with the power of God.”<sup>180</sup>

She also said that Greater New York should be a symbol of the work the Lord desires to see in the world. I have to say that the Greater New Conference for more than 118 years has been that lamp and symbol. However, an assessment conducted in 2014 revealed that the Conference had been losing one of its main missionary components: the vision of multiplication.

At that time, out of the five Ethnic Ministries that structure the Conference, three were stopped entirely in the vision of planting new churches, and only two were moving slowly. The Korean Ministry, for example, had produced its last church in 1989. Both the English and the Franco-Haitian Ministries had planted their previous churches more than ten years ago. Only the Multiethnic and the Spanish Ministries were barely growing.

I have to be honest; significant efforts had been made during the last few years to change the picture. Leaders like Gerson Santos put great efforts to promote events like EXPONENTIAL, the leading event for church planters in North America, which has done an invaluable job in awareness, inspiration, and training.

### **The Mighty Movement GNYC – Project 100**

The Mighty Movement GNYC is a vision launched in 2015, inspired in the book of Revelation 18:1, where it is written: “After these things I saw another angel coming

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<sup>180</sup> Ellen G. White, *Ministry to the Cities* (México: IADPA, 2012), 143. Also in Testimonies for The Church 7:54, 55 (1902).

down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.”

And also, the statement made by Ellen G. White in 1910 that declares:

“There is no change in the messages that God has sent in the past. The work in the cities is the essential work for this time. When the cities are worked as God would have them, the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed.”<sup>181</sup>

In other words, The Mighty Movement GNYC is a way to evangelize New York through church planting. The vision statement of the program is: Every Disciple Making a Disciple and Every Church Planting a Church.

To achieve such an audacious goal, the GNYC must lean wholly on God’s Spirit and make church planting part of its’ core DNA. Leaders must inspire the workers and laity to accept God’s planting vision to help reach His lost children. Churches must see God’s design in parenting new churches as all believers’ priesthood is reemphasized by identifying, equipping, and encouraging gifted lay members to start new congregations! Pastors will need encouragement and direction. And all these must be done prayerfully, strategically, and intentionally.

The three fundamentally phases are:

- 2015                      The first fruits meaning ten new churches planted in 2015
- 2016 – 2023            Meaning 100 new churches planted by 2023
- 2024 – Beyond        A culture of multiplication

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<sup>181</sup> Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry*. (California: Pacific Press, 1963) 304

## **Events and Initiatives**

### **Mapping Greater New York**

At every meeting, we displayed maps of the five Boroughs of New York City: The Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island, Long Island, and Upstate with the locations of Adventist churches pinned with color-coded pins. This gave a visual reference to our churches' sites and clustering to identify new areas for plants.

### **First Meeting of Disciples and Church Planters**

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014, over 350 persons attended the *First Meeting of Disciples and Church Planters* held at the Thessalonica Baptist Church in the Bronx. Presenters included Dr. Gerson Santos, former Director of the Global Mission Urban Center of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, and church planters Kevin Sears and Steve Leddy. Dr. G. Earl Knight, former President of the Greater New York Conference, delivered the mid-day message, entitled "Go and Make Disciples!" Church planters left the venue inspired and committed to plant churches and make disciples.<sup>182</sup>

### **Church Planting Battle Cry**

On March 11, 2016, at the Grand Concourse SDA Church and on the 12<sup>th</sup> at First Thessalonian Baptist Church in the South Bronx, more than 500 people came to learn more about the vision of planting 100 churches in GNYC by the year 2023. Present were various members of the Executive Leadership Team who offered prayers, praise, words

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<sup>182</sup> This original report of this first event was written by former Advisory Member, brother Leslie William

of encouragement, and exhortations. Presenters were from the North American Division Evangelism Institute (NADEI). A 'first fruits' parade of 15 churches planted from the 2014' Meeting of Disciples and Church Planters' was heralded by a trumpet blast by Dionisio Sosa. The music of Frank Valdez, Hope Montana, and Kay Fray provided a high spiritual accent.

### **GNYC Church Planting Festival Celebrates 35 New Churches**

Sabbath, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017, *The Battle Cry Continues* with nearly 700 people at the First Thessalonian Baptist Church to celebrate the 35 new church plants and to thank God for his guidance. Pastor Beras acknowledged the efforts of the Multi-Ethnic, Korean, English, Spanish, and the Franco-Haitian in working to further the gospel in New York, reflecting the broader goal of the Greater New York Conference's church planting as instilling a culture of discipleship by adopting the Vision: "Every Disciple Making a Disciple and Every Church Planting a Church." This Vision, I believe, perfectly reflected Christ's method.

The festival was also celebrated in 2018 and 2019, with over 700 in attendance. The church planting festival 2020, scheduled for March 14, 2020, was canceled due to the Covid19.

### **Coaching and Planting of Team Assessment**

We used the Assessment, Coaching, Training, and Sending (ACTS) strategy to equip lay leaders with the department's vision. The first session of Spiritual Leadership Development Coaching took place on June 23, 2015. Session two occurred June 24 and 25, 2015, and on November 9 and 10, 2015, the third was conducted. These were designed to help leaders reach their full potential as they equip others. Gerson P. Santos

completed the training, Steve Leddy, Erlo Braun, Pr. Manuel Rosario, Greg & Bonnie Schaller, Rick McEdward, Anthony WagenerSmith, and Samuel Peguero. Participants explored their Leadership Styles, Personality Types, and diverse approaches to mentor and coach others. About 30 Pastors and lay leaders completed the program.

A three-day Evaluation and Assessment retreat was held from March 13-15, 2015, at Camp Berkshire, Wingdale, with 50 leaders from all the Ethnic Directors, church planters, and Pastors. Spiritual life assessments were conducted with the elder questionnaires and the APEST questionnaire based on Ephesians 4; Apostle, Pastor, Evangelist, Shepherd, and Teacher. The principle is that strong spiritual leaders can duplicate and multiply, creating healthy churches that then can plant new ones on the continuum.

Another assessment event was later held in September 2016. From March 30 to April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, a fifty-nine-person delegation of Pastors and key persons attended the sponsored NAD Church Planting Summit in Camp Kulaqua, Florida. Costs were covered by the GNYC and the NAD. We have intentionally nurtured our existing congregations throughout GNYC by equipping our pastors in increasing the health of the current churches with seminars and books on creating healthy Seventh-day Adventist churches through natural church development.

### **Church Planter's Institute (CPI), Church Planting Intensive, and Master Group**

In 2017 we launched CPI to give in-depth training on how to start and establish influential new churches. This was one of the most detailed, time-intensive training on church planting offered in this Conference. This was provided to all members and Pastors

of our Conference. Conference-wide training included Pastor Steve Leddy's, *Ten Steps to Building Healthy New Churches*, which encourages a community survey, needs assessment, and careful observation to remain sensitive to the population served.

Church Planting Intensive is a condensed version of the CPI training, to facilitate those starting a new church or intending to do so within a short timeframe. Its portability aspect is also ideal for a broad reach in our Conference. On March 25-27, 2017, about 30 leaders from over ten nationalities completed the first training.

The Master Group is a type of think-tank for church planting. Conference leaders and Pastors from various departments spend time learning new approaches and purposes of church planting, exploring ideas to share in training, and determining the best ways to disseminate and support the church planting goals of our Conference.

### **Church Planting External Impact**

This initiative has inspired a visiting delegation from the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia, and South Korea. It has also generated invitations from the Northeastern Conference, USA, and the Southeastern Conference in the Dominican Republic, which recently completed its plan to plant 100 new churches.

### **Visits to the Church Planters Boot Camp, Church Planters Exchange, and Exponential**

Since the first Church Planters Boot Camp was launched in 2016, the GNYC has been the leading Conference in bringing pastors and lay leaders to Orlando's yearly training, with an average of 50 attendees over the last three years. The pastors have also been sponsored to visit the Church Planters Exchange and Exponential, the leading



church planting conference globally. Also, thousands of books and Bible Studies have been given to supply the church planters.

### **Outcome**

According to Secretariat, as of December 2015, we had 154 churches and 18 companies totaling 172; however, as of December 2019, they reported 160 churches and 33 companies totaling 193. It is 21 more, showing an increase of 12.20% in five years ( $21 \times 100 / 172$ ). It does not include the mission groups, which add another 30, for a total multiplication rate of 29.65% ( $52 \times 100 / 172$ ) for the quinquennial and 6% per year.

### **Some of the New Churches**

By the grace of God, so far, we have planted over fifty new congregations, including Pelham Parkway Sp. SDA church, NY Filipino SDA Church, Bethel Sp. SDA; Maranatha Sp., Misericordia Sp., Manantial de Vida Sp., Mount Sinai Sp., Oasis de Esperanza Sp., La Paz Sp., Shirley Fr., Bronx Fr., Apocalypse Fr., MYGEN; Morningside Sp.; Bethany, Long Island Korean, Croton Falls, Luz y Esperanza Sp., 138th St. Sp., Gun Hill Sp., Throgs Neck, Living Waters, Renacer Sp. SDA Church, Richmond Hill Southern Asian, Ambassadors, Park Hill Sp., Wappinger Sp., Hyde Park Sp., Green Port Sp., Arca de Salvación, Coop- City Sp., Light House, Shekinah Bilingual SDA Church, Punjabi, Queens International Filipino SDA, Canaan Sp. SDA, Antioche Fr, New Jerusalem Fr, among many others.

## **The Challenge**

Our challenge now as Greater New York Conference, is first, out of these church plants, consolidate the desired culture of multiplication, turning the pilot plant into a real, sustainable, cost-effective, and easy to follow the model and second, provide the facts to motivate the 70% of our churches still not involved in planting.

We are to answer these three questions: Why plant new churches? How to plant these churches, and what kind of churches should they be? The short answers are: We plant churches because of 1) The biblical imperative, 2) The mandate of the Spirit of Prophecy 3) Our Denomination History 4) Our Prophetic Destiny.

Regarding the how these are the pillars: 1) Kingdom mindset and harvest oriented (we are planting Jesus) 2) Long term committed leadership 3) Clear strategic plan and financial support 4) Flexible in methods 5) Integral support system (discipleship, mentoring, coaching, training, preaching, reading)

Concerning the what, these pillars are essential: 1) Holy Spirit Led 2) Multiplication mindset, 3) Youth driven 4) Community-oriented (relevant) 5) Portable and technology-based.

## **CHAPTER 7 PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Methodology:**

This project is based on three fundamental objectives achieved by a set of carefully programmed strategies from July 2020 - January 2021. The researcher organized a series of meetings and discussions in small groups via zoom. He also planned individual meetings, mentoring sessions, coaching assistance, and a plethora of training. Document translations, field research, statistics, talks, classes, and webinars were also performed.

### **Goals and Strategies**

**Goal 1:** Raise awareness on the urgency to rekindle the culture of planting new churches as a critical evangelistic method to reach new people for God's kingdom.

**Strategy 1:** Develop with a master group the criteria to implement the project, starting with the awareness campaign. This task was completed on July 27, 2020.

### **Criteria of Implementation:**

- The project was limited to the churches planted from 2015 to 2019 due to the COVID 19 pandemic.
- The financial assessment was limited to the church planting projects that send their remittances directly to the GNYC.

- The surveys were applied openly to all GNYC leaders; however, it was segmented by the following departments: Elders, Treasury, Secretariat, Evangelism, Sabbath School, Youth, Audiovisuals, Communication, and Community Service. It was also applied to pastors and provided a space labeled as others.
- Resources were provided digitally.
- Digital booklet and surveys were provided in English and Spanish.<sup>183</sup>
- The survey was sent electronically using the platform monkey survey, but the IBM SPSS software was used to analyze the data.

**Strategy 2:** Distribute a digital booklet in English and Spanish to motivate the vision and promote the benefits of a micro-church multiplication system to be circulated among the board members of the new congregations planted between 2015-2019. This task lasted from August January 2021)

**Strategy 3:** Produce a quantitative-qualitative study targeting the spiritual, missional, and financial growth of the new churches planted in the GNYC between 2015 – 2019 to be distributed among their board members. This task was completed in December 2020.

Churches Researched:

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<sup>183</sup> See appendix C

No.	Church Plant	Ministry	Status
1	Pelham Parkway SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Church
2	Misericordia SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
3	Bethel Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Church
4	Luz y Esperanza SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group
5	138th SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group
6	Manantial de Vida SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
7	Sp. Mount Sinai SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
8	Sp. Morning Side SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
9	Oasis de Esperanza	Hispanic Ministries	Company
10	Gun Hill Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group
11	Maranata Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
12	La Paz SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Church
13	Wappingers Falls Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group
14	Spanish Hyde Park SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group
15	Arca de Salvación	Hispanic Ministries	Group
16	Canaan Sp. SDA	Hispanic Ministries	Group
17	Inwood Sp.	Hispanic Ministries	Group
18	Renacer	Hispanic Ministries	NE Conf
19	Park Hill, Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Closed
20	My Gen SDA Church	English Ministries	Company
21	Ambassadors SDA Church	English Ministries	Group
22	City of Refuge SDA Church	English Ministry	Closed
23	Bridge SDA Church	English Ministries	Failed
24	Shirley Fr. SDA Church	Franco-Haitian M.	Company
25	Bronx Franco Haitian SDA Church	Franco-Haitian M.	Company
26	Apocalypse SDA Church	Franco-Haitian M.	Company
27	New Jerusalem Fr	Franco-Haitian M.	Company
28	Antioche Fr	Franco-Haitian M.	Group
29	Sion Fr	Franco-Haitian M.	Group
30	Shekinah Bilingual SDA Church	Franco-Haitian M.	Group
31	Long Island Korean SDA Church	Korean Ministries	Company
32	NY Filipino SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Church
33	Living Waters SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
34	Richmond Hill Southern Asian	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
35	Croton Falls SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
36	Manhattan Chinese SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Closed
37	Throgs Neck Multi-Purpose Center	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Group
38	Bethany SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
39	Punjabi SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
40	Hudson Project	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Failed
41	Queens International Filipino SDA	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company

**Evaluation of Goal 1:** Design a survey to measure the attitude toward church planting of the GNYC members. The study will also estimate the spiritual and missional health of the potential planters. This task was completed in November 2020.

## **Survey:**

Survey on attitude and favorability towards Church Planting:

### ***I. Demographics:***

**1. Sex:**

- [1] Male
- [2] Female

**2. Years in the Adventist church: \_\_\_\_\_**

**3. Age Range:**

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| [1] 18-24       | [2] 25-34 years       |
| [3] 35-44 years | [4] 45-54 years       |
| [5] 55-64 years | [6] 65 years or older |

**4. Position or Department you serve:**

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| [1] Pastor              | [2] Elder             |
| [3] Personal Ministries | [4] Community Service |
| [5] Communication       | [6] Secretariat       |
| [7] Youth               | [8] Sabbath School    |
| [9] Treasury            | [10] Other            |

**5. Ethnic Ministry:**

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| [1] English      | [2] Hispanic       |
| [3] Multi-Ethnic | [4] Franco-Haitian |
| [5] Korean       |                    |

**6. I have received training in church planting:**

- [1] Yes [2] No

**7. Please specify in how many church-planting events you have participated in the last five years:**

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| [1] One to Three  | [2] Four to Six |
| [3] Seven to Nine | [4] Ten or More |

**8. Please specify how many churches for live you have helped to plant?**

- [1] One
- [3] Four to Five
- [5] Eight to nine
- [7] None

- [2] Two to three
- [4] Six to seven
- [6] Ten or more

**9. What do you think about the idea to plant online churches by zoom and other digital platforms?**

- [1] I think it's an excellent idea and I would like to give it a try
- [2] I don't think it will work
- [3] I don't know

**10. How many churches would you be willing to plant in the next ten years?**

- [1] None
- [3] Two

- [2] One
- [4] Three or more

***II. Attitude towards Church Planting***

**1. Being part of a church planting project has been:**

- [1] A blessing [2] An unpleasant experience [3] None of the above

**2. Being part of a small church has impacted my life:**

- [1] Positively [2] Negatively [3] It doesn't apply to me

**3. If I were asked to be part of another church planting project:**

- [1] I would do it gladly [2] I do not think I would accept the challenge again [3] I do not know.

**4. In my experience, small churches are:**

- [1] More missionary [2] Less missionary [3] It is the same.



**5. Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:**

[1] Positively, [2] Negatively, [3] I do not know.

**6. My experience with the online services through zoom or others has been:**

[1] Very positive [2] Positive [3] Neutral [4] Negative [5] very Negative

***III. Miscellaneous. Please answer Yes or No***

1. I feel loved in my local church. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Our worship service is inspiring. \_\_\_\_\_
3. My church cares about new believers. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I am giving at least one Bible Study. \_\_\_\_\_
5. We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I am an active member of a small group. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I use my phone and the social media to share my faith. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Our church is positively impacting the community. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Our virtual worship (zoom, phone line, etc.) has been a blessing. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
10. The leaders of this church dream of planting other churches.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Goal 2:** Appoint a master group of 8-12 people, including pastors and lay church planters, to design, implement, and evaluate the project. The group should include at least one computer engineer as a technological advisor.

**Strategy 1:** Develop a selection standard for the master group members. It should provide a specific skill set to implement the project. This task was completed between July 15 -30, 2020.

**Selection Standard:**

- Two Departmental leaders involved in church planting
- Two full-time pastors who have shown an interest in church planting
- At least two Associate Pastors involved in church planting
- Two church planters not employed full time by the GNYC
- An expert in technology and social networks familiar with church planting
- An expert on the financial system of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- One representative of all the five ethnic ministries of the GNYC

**Strategy 2:** Select the master group members. Dedicate three one-hour zoom sections to design a master plan to implement the project, including vision, mission, values, goals, strategies, budgets, timeline, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to short-term and long-term evaluation. The plan must be based on these three pillars: why plant new churches, how to

plant new churches, and what kind of churches we should grow. This task was completed between July 15-30, 2020.

**Master Group Members:**

**1. Steve Cassimy, DMin**

Dr. Cassimy has been in ministry for more than 40 years. He is very acquainted with the church planting movement. As a former Ministerial Director and English Ministry Director of our Institution, he is very respected academically and professionally, especially within the English and Multiethnic Ministries, which are vital in this church planting project.

**2. Dr. Baniel Lara**

Pastor Baniel Lara is our Publishing Evangelist director. He is a church planter by heart; having planted more than seven churches in the last five years, he is an authorized voice. He holds a Doctor's Business Administration. Finally, pastor Lara will represent the Hispanic Ministry, which represents about 40 percent of our constituency.

**3. Pr. Everette Samuel, MDiv**

Pastor Everette Samuel has been related for years to the church planting movement, and she is very knowledgeable about the topic. She is the first pastor to plant a new church in her community in the last 15 years. Pastor Samuel is finishing her Ph.D. in leadership, so as an experienced church planter woman that established a vibrant parachute church in Far Rockway, she will bring a lot to the table.

**4. Pr. Herode Thomas, MDiv**

Pastor Herode Thomas has been the Haitian pastor that most churches have planted in the last five years. He is also working on his DMin dissertation at Andrews University. Pastor Thomas has gained the reputation of a

church planter par excellence among his community, and we do not doubt that he could be a great asset.

**5. Pr. Jae Hwan Shin, MDiv**

Pastor Shin is the church planter of the only Korean new church planted in our Conference in the last 30 years. He is someone passionate about church planting, and due to his view and background, we understand that he could be a great blessing to this project

**6. Samuel Peguero, DMin**

Pastor Samuel Peguero is the current Family Life Director of the Greater New York Conference; he has planted over 20 churches in the last 25 years. He is also the first pastor to produce a bilingual- second-generation church in the Greater New York Conference.

**7. Engineer Victor Campusano**

Victor is a Systems Engineer / Auditing Specialist / Data Analyst, and SQL Expert. He has worked in corporate banking for years while developing church service projects. Victor loves church planting and has served as our graphic designer since the inception of the planting project in November 2014.

**8. Dauris Contreras, MDiv**

He was invited to the project as an intern since he is not a full-time employee of the Greater New York Conference, but he is one of the most experienced planters in the project. He has run two of the most successful churches planted in the Manhattan area.

## **9. Andres Canela, MAMP**

Also invited as a practitioner, since he is not a full-time employee of the GNYC, he is one of the leading planters and the first adapters of the vision. The church he led planted four years ago helped produce a second church and is now growing a new congregation in the Coop-City community.

## **10. Hernán Silvestre**

He is an associate pastor employed by the Institution; he was trained in Urban ministry and began his ministry by planting in the Manhattan community. Herman is passionate about church planting in the cities.

**Strategy 3:** Expose the master group members to the North American Division of SDA church planters boot camp to help consolidate their vision. This task was completed in November 2020.

**Evaluation of Goal 2:** The minutes, verifying that the team has been selected and the tasks accomplished. Also, at least 80% of the TEAM should be present at the zoom sections and the weekend training, and not less than 75% should assist the NAD church planters' boot camp. This task was accomplished on November 2020.

**Goal 3:** Design a portable technology-based church planting multiplication model that facilitates a cost-effective reproduction process to be piloted across the new churches of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists planted between 2015-2019. Please see next chapter.

**Strategy 1:** Appoint an ad hoc committee with pastors, experts, practitioners, and lay leaders that support the church planting movement to

validate the new churches' values, structure, average size, financial system, support system, and technological spectrum designed by the master group. The meeting will be via Zoom and will last about 3 hours.

This task was accomplished in September 2020

Members of the Ad hoc Committee<sup>184</sup>

1. Dr. Baniel Lara
2. Dr. Elvis Díaz
3. Ethnic Ministries Coordinators by availability

**Strategy 2:** Launch the GNYC online Church Plating Institute to train, for three months, in the vision of multiplication at least 25 church planting teams selected out of the new churches planted between 2015-2019. The Institute started in September 2020 meeting for 2 hours twice a month to teach the new system.

The instructions were on Sabbaths from 3:00 – 5:00 pm.<sup>185</sup> Also, the researcher started a pilot plant for a future online church plant. The group has been meeting every Sunday at 6:00 pm via zoom since August 9. The group has a membership of over fifty, but the average reach is about 25 people weakly. This program is still on.

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<sup>184</sup> It also includes leaders of the Ethnic Ministries Directors to whom I have consulted over the project.

<sup>185</sup> See appendix G

**Online Church Planting Institute Dates:**

- September 26
- October 10
- October 24
- November 7
- November 28
- December 5
- December 19

**Strategy 3:** Design a Facebook page to provide resources and assist in implementing the project. This task was accomplished in November 2020.

You can find that page on Facebook under the name pastor Manuel Rosario. It has 5023 followers now.

**Strategy 4:** Organize a church planting festival entirely dedicated to church multiplication. At least 100 leaders are expected to assist. It could be face-to-face or virtual according to the new-normal post-COVID 19. This task was accomplished on November 29, 2020.

**Evaluation:** A minimum of 85% of the New Church Planting Institute graduates understands the three fundamental pillars of the master plan: why plant churches, how to plant churches, and what type of churches to plant. At least 70% of the teams should commit to growing a new church plant within two years from the training's conclusion. Thank God, this goal was surpassed, as will be seen in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT**

This section describes the methodological design that led the research: type of study, techniques, universe, sample, and instrument for data collection, tabulation, and analysis. It establishes the procedures that served to answer the empirical questions of the survey. The strategy aimed to maximize the validity and reliability of the information, avoid biases, reduce errors in the results, and delve into the research's core aspects.

Given that the topic had not been scientifically studied in the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the results are shown in an exploratory and descriptive format. This research level does not carry hypotheses but is a generator of new theories for future correlational and explanatory studies. The report includes a financial and membership assessment.

#### **General Goals**

The general goals of this research are:

- a) Determine the level of participation of the pastors and lay leaders in the Church Planting Movement.
- b) Establish the constituents' attitudes toward online church planting.
- c) Examine the strength of the missionary culture among the pastors and parishioners.
- d) Identify the spiritual health of the potential future planters.

#### **Specific Goals**

The specific goals focus on:

- e) Calculate the frequencies of all the variables.



- f) Compute the measures of central tendency where needed.
- g) Crosstab the central variables by the demographic indicators.
- d) Consult relevant findings with experts and church planting practitioners.

### **Empirical Questions**

The empirical questions of this research are:

- a) What is the level of participation of the pastors and lay-leaders in the Church Planting Movement?
- b) What are the constituents' attitudes toward on-line church planting?
- c) How strong is the spiritual health of the future planters?
- d) How vibrant is the SDA missionary culture among the pastors and parishioners?

### **Operationalization of variables**

Table No. 1  
Demographic Variable

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Operational Definition</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Feasible Stats Measurements</b>
<b>Demographic</b>	Etymologically, it comes from the Greek words' demos, population, and graphein, to write; therefore, it is the people's description. Their importance is vital since they constitute the critical cross-over variable in scientific studies.	-Sex -Years in the SDA church -Age Group -Position or Department -Ethnic Ministry	Nominal	- Frequencies - Mode - Chi-squared -Binomial expression - Coefficient of contingency

Table No. 2  
Level of Participation

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators	Scale	Feasible Stats Measurements
<b>Level of Participation</b>	This variable describes the level of knowledge in church planting, but also the involvement in past projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Training in church planting</li> <li>-Participation in church planting events</li> <li>-Churches the leaders helped to plant</li> </ul>	Ordinal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Frequencies</li> <li>-Mean, Mode &amp; Median</li> <li>-Standard Deviation</li> <li>-Chi-squared</li> <li>-Coefficient of Contingency</li> <li>-Kendall and Spearman Correlation</li> <li>-Multidimensional Analysis</li> <li>-Correspondence Analysis</li> </ul>

Table No. 3  
Attitudes about on-line church planting

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators	Scale	Feasible Stats Measurements
<b>Attitudes about on-line church planting</b>	Level of favorability or not towards the online micro-church planting movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Thinking about the idea to plant on-line churches by zoom and other digital platforms</li> <li>-Churches the leaders helped to plant</li> <li>-Number of churches the leaders are willing to help to plant in the next ten years</li> <li>-Personal experience with church planting</li> <li>-Impact on personal life</li> <li>-Willingness to plant</li> <li>-Belief in the efficiency of small church plants</li> <li>-Impact of church planting on family life</li> <li>-Experience during COVID 19 with online services through zoom and other platforms</li> <li>Leadership dream of planting other churches</li> </ul>	Ordinal and Likert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Frequencies</li> <li>-Mean</li> <li>-Mode</li> <li>-Median</li> <li>-Standard Deviation</li> <li>-Chi-squared</li> <li>-Coefficient of Contingency</li> <li>-Kendall and Spearman Correlation</li> <li>-Multidimensional Analysis</li> <li>-Correspondence Analysis</li> </ul>

Table No. 4  
Spiritual health of the potential planters

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators	Scale	Statistical Measurements
<b>Spiritual health of the potential planters</b>	Church planting is a discipleship tool; those that form the core team will give direction to the future plant. They need to be in good spiritual and missional health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Feel loved in the local church</li> <li>- We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders</li> <li>-Inspiring worship service</li> <li>-Care about new believers</li> <li>-Giving at least one Bible Study</li> <li>-Active member of a small group</li> <li>-Impacting the community</li> <li>-Used of the cellphone and social media to share the faith</li> </ul>	Ordinal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Frequencies</li> <li>-Mean</li> <li>-Mode</li> <li>-Median</li> <li>-Standard Deviation</li> <li>-Chi-squared</li> <li>-Coefficient of Contingency</li> <li>-Kendall and Spearman Correlation</li> <li>-Multidimensional Analysis</li> <li>-Correspondence Analysis</li> </ul>

### Universe and Sample

The importance of sampling is that you do not need to work on all the universe elements to understand the phenomenon with a reasonable accuracy level. The sample should be considered representative of that population. When it does not, the first of the two possible sampling errors occurs, the bias error; the second, due to chance, is the random error. Other criteria to consider are homogeneity and independence.

To estimate the sample size, it is necessary to know the confidence you want the data to reach. Usually, academic studies operate with 95%, equivalent to two sigmas. The researcher obtained this 95% ( $Z = 1.96$ ) and an estimated error of  $\pm 5\%$  (0.05) with a fair

variability of  $p = .7$ , which for the referred population ( $N = 33,000$ ), yields a sample of 320 cases.<sup>186</sup>

The researcher used a non-probability sampling because he is not interested in generalizing but in obtaining a profile. The sample is sufficient to represent the whole, but it does not seek to segment by demographic indicators attributing them over statistical weight.

The survey contained 29 questions and was designed with SurveyMonkey,<sup>187</sup> an online survey development cloud-based software. The researcher sent the link to the constituents via emails and text messages. The collection lasted two weeks, and then the pollster processed the data with the IBM-SPSS Statistical Package.

### **Analysis of the Findings**

The results are presented in the following order:

- Frequencies and crosstabs of the demographic and level of participation's variables
- Crosstabs of the attitude's variable
- Crosstabs of the spiritual life's variable
- Summary
- Financial and Membership Assessment
- Recommendations

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<sup>186</sup> See <http://www.berrie.dds.nl/calcss.htm>

<sup>187</sup> See <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KNWPZRG>

### **Frequencies and crosstabs of the demographic and level of participation's variables**

The first empirical question asks: What is the level of participation of the pastors and lay-leaders in the Church Planting Movement? This section intends to answer that question. The researcher will explore the following indicators:

- Sex
- Years in the SDA church
- Age Group
- Position or Department
- Ethnic Ministry
- Training in church planting
- Participation in church planting events
- Churches the leaders helped to plant

Table No. 5 establishes that 49.4% (n=155) of the sample are male and the 50.6% (n= 159) are female. According to the study: Religious Landscape, conducted by Pew Research in 2014, <sup>188</sup>the correlation between men and women in the SDA was 46% men and 54% women. In this case, the correlation is tighter due to the overwhelming majority of male pastors, representing 18.2% (n=57) of the universe.

Table No.5  
Percentage of respondents by sex

		<b>Sex</b>			<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>49.4</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.9</b>		
<b>Total</b>		<b>320</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

Table No. 6 informs about the age groups, indicating that .9% (n=3) are under 18; 3.1% (n=10) are between 18 -24; 11% (n=35) are 25-34; 21% (n=67) are 35-44; 27.9% (n=89) are 45-54; 23.8% (n=55-64) and 12.2% (n=39) are 65+. As can be seen the age groups between 25 – 64 represent the 83.7% of the cases.

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<sup>188</sup> "Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics, and Statistics." Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Last Modified, September 9, 2020. Accessed January 8, 2021. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-denomination/seventh-day-adventist/>.

Table No. 6  
Percentage of respondents age group

		<b>Age Group</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 18	3	.9	.9	.9
	18-24	10	3.1	<b>3.1</b>	4.1
	25-34	35	10.9	<b>11.0</b>	15.0
	35-44	67	20.9	<b>21.0</b>	36.1
	45-54	89	27.8	<b>27.9</b>	63.9
	55-64	76	23.8	<b>23.8</b>	87.8
	65+	39	12.2	<b>12.2</b>	100.0
	Total	319	99.7	<b>100.0</b>	
Missing	System	1	.3		
Total		320	100.0		

Table No. 7 tells that the mean of the participants' years in the church is 28.593. The oldest person was 70 and the youngest 2. The std. deviation is 16.7087, meaning that most of the group have between 11.884 (28.593 - 16.7087) and 45.3017 years to be baptized (28.593 + 16.7087). In the meantime, the median, which is the midpoint of the data set, is 36. It means half of the cases are over, and a half under that age. When the media and the median are the same, the data is more or less equally divided. We have a gap of 8 years, which is fair; one thing is clear; they are certainly not neophytes.

It is an essential element for future church planting projects in the GNYC. The critical factor in church planting is leadership. Renowned leadership expert, John C. Maxwell, said it best: "Everything rises and falls on leadership." If you expect your church plant to grow beyond your capacity to lead others, you need to develop leadership in your church. There are two elements to this challenge: developing people and



developing the organization.<sup>189</sup> It is true that the years in the church not necessarily means leadership. I am not pretending that, and other indicators will be further explored and validate.

Table No. 7  
Years in the Adventist church

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Years in the Adventist church	252	2.0	70.0	28.593	16.7087	279.182
Valid N (listwise)	252					

According to the table No. 8, the 18.2 % (n=57) are pastors and the 81.1% (n=256) are lay people. The next two biggest subgroups among the lay people are elders with 17.3% (n=54) and the youth with 12.8% (n=40). This sample represents a fair representation of the current leadership of the GNYC.

Table No. 8  
Position or Department in which you serve

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<sup>189</sup> Logan, Bob. "Developing Leadership In Your Church Plant." ChurchPlanting.com. Last modified April 7, 2020. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.churchplanting.com/developing-leadership-in-your-church-plant/>.

Position or Department in which you serve		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Pastor	57	17.8	18.2	18.2
	Elder	54	16.9	17.3	35.5
	Personal Ministries	22	6.9	7.0	42.5
	Community Service	11	3.4	3.5	46.0
	Communication	2	.6	.6	46.6
	Secretariat	12	3.8	3.8	50.5
	Youth	40	12.5	12.8	63.3
	Sabbath School	29	9.1	9.3	72.5
	Treasury	15	4.7	4.8	77.3
	Other	71	22.2	22.7	100.0
	Total	313	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	7	2.2		
Total		320	100.0		

Table No. 9 presents a fundamental analysis of this section. The Greater New York Conference is composed of five Ethnic Ministries with about 33,000 thousand baptized members. The Hispanics are the largest, with roughly 37% of the constituents. The English represent 30%, the Multi-Ethnic 18%, the Franco- Haitian 13%, and Korean about 2%.

The researcher gave all the Ministries an equal opportunity, but the survey was answered by availability. The groups better represented are Hispanics with 59.3% (n=185), English with 25.6% (n=80), and Multi-Ethnic with 11.5% (n=36). The Franco-Haitians are significantly underrepresented, and the Koreans are fairly represented. The higher number of Hispanics matches their enthusiasm for church planting. The survey was provided in English and Spanish.

Table No. 9  
Ethnic Ministries

		Ethnic Ministry			Cumulative Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	English	80	25.0	25.6	25.6
	Hispanic	185	57.8	59.3	84.9
	Multi-Ethnic	36	11.3	11.5	96.5
	Franco-Haitian	7	2.2	2.2	98.7
	Korean	4	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	312	97.5	100.0	
Missing	System	8	2.5		
Total		320	100.0		

Table No. 10 crosses sex by training in church planting. The survey proves that men are more trained than women in church planting, with a difference of 56.1% (n=106) to 40.6%. It might not be accurate by the universe in general but due to specific factors detailed further.

Table No. 10  
Sex by Training in Church Planting

Crosstab							
		I have received training in church planting				Total	
		Yes		No			
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	106	56.1%	41	40.6%	147	50.7%
	Female	83	43.9%	60	59.4%	143	49.3%
Total		189	100.0%	101	100.0%	290	100.0%

Table No. 11 helps explain table No. 10 since pastors and elders embody more than half of the group totaling 65.1% (n=99). The pastors are 98.2 % (n=54) male and 1.8% (n=1) female. The elders are 84.9% (n=45) male and 15.1% (n=8) female. Particularly the pastors are more trained in church planting. In most of the remaining

positions, ladies are way more. For instance, out of 40 cases in the youth ministry, only 11% (n=5) are male, and the remaining 89% (n= 35) female.

Table No. 11  
Sex by Position or Department

		Position or Department in which you serve * Sex Crosstabulation					
		Sex					
		Male		Female		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Position or Department in which you serve	Pastor	54	35.5%	1	0.6%	55	17.9%
	Elder	45	29.6%	8	5.1%	53	17.2%
	Personal Ministries	9	5.9%	13	8.3%	22	7.1%
	Community Service	3	2.0%	8	5.1%	11	3.6%
	Communication	1	0.7%	1	0.6%	2	0.6%
	Secretariat	0	0.0%	12	7.7%	12	3.9%
	Youth	5	3.3%	35	22.4%	40	13.0%
	Sabbath School	4	2.6%	25	16.0%	29	9.4%
	Treasury	7	4.6%	7	4.5%	14	4.5%
	Other	24	15.8%	46	29.5%	70	22.7%
Total		152	100.0%	156	100.0%	308	100.0%

Table No. 12 shows that Hispanics are the more trained group in church planting. They represent 58.9% (n=116) of the participants in 1-3 events (n=197), and 72.4% (n=21) of the participants in 4-6 events. This pattern is repeated in all the subsequent scenarios.

Table No. 12  
Ethnic Ministries by Participation in Church Planting Events in the last five years

		Crosstab									
		Please specify in how many church planting events you have participated in the last 5 years								Total	
		1-3		4-6		7-9		10+			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ethnic Ministry	English	47	23.9%	3	10.3%	1	20.0%	2	11.1%	53	21.3%
	Hispanic	116	58.9%	21	72.4%	4	80.0%	12	66.7%	153	61.4%
	Multi-Ethnic	24	12.2%	5	17.2%	0	0.0%	4	22.2%	33	13.3%
	Franco-Haitian	6	3.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	2.4%
	Korean	4	2.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	1.6%
Total		197	100.0%	29	100.0%	5	100.0%	18	100.0%	249	100.0%

According to the table No. 13, the age groups better trained in church planting are 35-44 with a 70.1 % (n=47) out of 67 cases, followed by 45-54 with 66.7% (n=54) out of 81 and 55-64 with a 67.6% (n=48) out of 71. It is self-evident that people under 35 are not well represented in the church planting movement what must be addressed.

Table No. 13  
Age Group by Participation in Church Planting Events in the last five years

Age Group * I have received training in church planting Crosstabulation					
Age Group			I have received training in church planting		Total
			Yes	No	
Under 18	Count		2	1	3
	% within Age Group		66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within I have received training in church planting		1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
	% of Total		0.7%	0.3%	1.0%
18-24	Count		4	3	7
	% within Age Group		57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within I have received training in church planting		2.1%	2.9%	2.4%
	% of Total		1.4%	1.0%	2.4%
25-34	Count		18	16	34
	% within Age Group		52.9%	47.1%	100.0%
	% within I have received training in church planting		9.4%	15.5%	11.6%
	% of Total		6.1%	5.4%	11.6%
35-44	Count		47	20	67
	% within Age Group		70.1%	29.9%	100.0%
	% within I have received training in church planting		24.6%	19.4%	22.8%
	% of Total		16.0%	6.8%	22.8%
45-54	Count		54	27	81
	% within Age Group		66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	% within I have received training in church planting		28.3%	26.2%	27.6%
	% of Total		18.4%	9.2%	27.6%
55-64	Count		48	23	71
	% within Age Group		67.6%	32.4%	100.0%
	% within I have received training in church planting		25.1%	22.3%	24.1%
	% of Total		16.3%	7.8%	24.1%
65+	Count		18	13	31
	% within Age Group		58.1%	41.9%	100.0%
	% within I have received training in church planting		9.4%	12.6%	10.5%
	% of Total		6.1%	4.4%	10.5%
Total	Count		191	103	294
	% within Age Group		65.0%	35.0%	100.0%
	% within I have received training in church planting		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total		65.0%	35.0%	100.0%

Table No, 14. evidence the experience in church planting of the constituents. 40.5% (n=49) of the males and 59.5% (n=72) of the females have never help to plant a church. It means that 41.1% of the cases (n=122) are inexperienced, but a lovely 56.3% (n=179) are either experienced or well- experienced. The 2.6% (9) did not answered

Table No. 14  
Sex by Number of churches planted for life

<b>Sex * Please specify how many churches for life you have helped to plant</b>					
<b>Crosstabulation</b>					
		Sex			
			Male	Female	Total
Please specify how many churches for life you have helped to plant	None	N	49	72	121
		%	40.5%	59.5%	100.0%
	1	N	29	45	74
		%	39.2%	60.8%	100.0%
	2-3	N	35	24	59
		%	59.3%	40.7%	100.0%
	4-5	N	14	7	21
		%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	6-7	N	6	2	8
		%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
	8-9	N	2	0	2
		%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Do not answer	N	2	6	8
		%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Total		N	137	156	293
		%	46.8%	53.2%	100.0%

### **Constituents' attitudes toward on-line church planting**

The second empirical question asks: What are the constituents' attitudes toward on-line church planting? This section intends to answer that interrogation. The researcher will explore the following indicators:

- Number of churches the leaders are willing to help to plant in the next ten years
- Personal experience with church planting
- Impact on personal life
- Impact of church planting on family life
- Thinking about the idea to plant on-line churches by zoom and other digital platforms
- Experience during COVID 19 with on-line services through zoom and other platforms
- Belief in the efficiency of small church plants
- Leadership dream of planting other churches

Table No. 15 clarifies the constituents' overall willingness to plant new churches in the next ten years. It is impressive that 58% (n=150) of the cases, men and women, are willing to plant three or more churches. Only a tiny 3.43% (n=11) is not committed to the vision. It is the first reliable indicator of a favorable attitude toward church planting. It is fundamental to highlight that 12.8% (n=10) of the pastors are enthusiastic to plant one church; 20% (n=13) 2; 21.5% (n=32) 3 or more, and only one pastor is hesitant to plant.

These numbers seem to affirm that the vision to create a multiplication culture, at least in theory, has been accepted.

Table No. 15

Sex by Number of churches willing to help to plant in the next 10 years

Sex * How many churches would you be willing to help to plant in the next 10 years? Crosstabulation					
			Sex		
			Male	Female	Total
How many churches would you be willing to help to plant in the next 10 years?	1	N	44	34	78
		%	56.4%	43.6%	100.0%
	2	N	28	38	66
		%	42.4%	57.6%	100.0%
	3+	N	76	74	150
		%	50.7%	49.3%	100.0%
	None	N	4	7	11
		%	36.4%	63.6%	100.0%
Total	N	152	153	305	
	%	49.8%	50.2%	100.0%	

Table No. 16 explores the correlation between the willingness to plant and the experience of planting. The Spearman coefficient,  $r_s$ , takes values from +1 to -1. An  $r_s$  of +1 indicates a perfect association; a  $r_s$  of zero means no association, and a  $r_s$  of -1 implies a perfect negative association.

The closer  $r_s$  is to zero, the weaker the association. In this case, the indicator *churches planted* correlates positively with a *willingness to plant*. A coefficient of .105 speaks of a small correlation, but the  $0.38 < 0.05$  specify that it is significant at the level of 0.05. It is great since it informs about experienced people willing to bring their skill into the future. This info is relevant for future studies and possible hypotheses.



Table No. 16  
Spearman's rho Correlation

Correlations				
			Please specify how many churches for life you have helped to plant	How many churches would you be willing to help to plant in the next 10 years?
Kendall's tau_b	Please specify how many churches for life you have helped to plant	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.092*
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.035
		N	297	290
	How many churches would you be willing to help to plant in the next 10 years?	Correlation Coefficient	.092*	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.035	.
		N	290	309
Spearman's rho	Please specify how many churches for life you have helped to plant	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.105*
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.038
		N	297	290
	How many churches would you be willing to help to plant in the next 10 years?	Correlation Coefficient	.105*	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.038	.
		N	290	309

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table No. 17 expresses how being part of a small church planting project has positively impacted the members' lives. In English, 53.9% (n=41) has affirmed it, followed by a 46.1% (n=35) that stated it does not apply to me. It is imperative to say that nobody in any sector expressed to be impacted negatively. Remarkably, 72.6% (n=127) and 75.0% (n=3) assured they were impacted positively among the Hispanic and the Korean communities. It is also encouraging the 66.7% (n=24) of the Multi-Ethnic. Church planting is a blessing for everybody, no doubt.

Table No. 17

Ethnic Ministry by how to be part of a small church plant has impacted my life

<b>Crosstab</b>			Being part of a small church plant has impacted my life:		
			Positively	It does not apply to me	Total
Ethnic Ministry	English	Count	41	35	76
		% within Ethnic Ministry	53.9%	46.1%	100.0%
		% within Being part of a small church plant has impacted my life:	20.6%	35.4%	25.5%
		% of Total	13.8%	11.7%	25.5%
	Hispanic	Count	127	48	175
		% within Ethnic Ministry	72.6%	27.4%	100.0%
		% within Being part of a small church plant has impacted my life:	63.8%	48.5%	58.7%
		% of Total	42.6%	16.1%	58.7%
	Multi-Ethnic	Count	24	12	36
		% within Ethnic Ministry	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Being part of a small church plant has impacted my life:	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%
		% of Total	8.1%	4.0%	12.1%
	Franco-Haitian	Count	4	3	7
		% within Ethnic Ministry	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
		% within Being part of a small church plant has impacted my life:	2.0%	3.0%	2.3%
		% of Total	1.3%	1.0%	2.3%
	Korean	Count	3	1	4
		% within Ethnic Ministry	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within Being part of a small church plant has impacted my life:	1.5%	1.0%	1.3%
		% of Total	1.0%	0.3%	1.3%
Total	Count		199	99	298
	% within Ethnic Ministry		66.8%	33.2%	100.0%
	% within Being part of a small church plant has impacted my life:		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total		66.8%	33.2%	100.0%

Table No. 18 affirms that church planting has been a blessing for the families also. As can be noticed, only 1.5 (n=3) % among the 63.8 % (n=183) who affirmed to be blessed positively said that their families were affected negatively. Future surveys can go deeper into this matter, but the actual numbers are encouraging for the church planters' families. It is a three layer's table that explores sex and personal and family impact.

Table No. 18  
Sex by personal and family impact

Sex * Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family: * Being part of a small church plant has impacted my life: Crosstabulation							
Being part of a small church plant has impacted my life:				Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:			Total
				Positively	Negatively	It does not apply to me	
Positively	Sex	Male	Count	90	2	14	106
			% within Sex	84.9%	1.9%	13.2%	100.0%
			% within Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:	55.9%	66.7%	43.8%	54.1%
		Female	Count	71	1	18	90
			% within Sex	78.9%	1.1%	20.0%	100.0%
			% within Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:	44.1%	33.3%	56.3%	45.9%
		Total	Count	161	3	32	196
			% within Sex	82.1%	1.5%	16.3%	100.0%
			% within Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
It does not apply to me	Sex	Male	Count	12		28	40
			% within Sex	30.0%		70.0%	100.0%
			% within Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:	54.5%		40.6%	44.0%
		Female	Count	10		41	51
			% within Sex	19.6%		80.4%	100.0%
			% within Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:	45.5%		59.4%	56.0%
		Total	Count	22		69	91
			% within Sex	24.2%		75.8%	100.0%
			% within Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%
Total	Sex	Male	Count	102	2	42	146
			% within Sex	69.9%	1.4%	28.8%	100.0%
			% within Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:	55.7%	66.7%	41.6%	50.9%
		Female	Count	81	1	59	141
			% within Sex	57.4%	0.7%	41.8%	100.0%
			% within Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:	44.3%	33.3%	58.4%	49.1%
		Total	Count	183	3	101	287
			% within Sex	63.8%	1.0%	35.2%	100.0%
			% within Being part of a church planting project has impacted my family:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table No. 19 shows that the idea of planting on-line churches by zoom and other digital platforms is welcome across the Ministries. The 85.5% (n=153) of the Hispanics, follows by the 73.8% (n=59) of the English, the 71.4% (n=25) of the Multi-Ethnic, the 57.1% of the Franco- Haitian and the 50 % (n=2) of the Korean support the idea and are willing to give it a try. Significantly, only 3.6% (n=11) think it will not work. The rest, 16.7% (n=51), said they do not know. The general approval rate is 79.73% (n=243).

Table No. 19  
Ethnic Ministry by the idea of planting on-line churches by zoom and other digital medias.

Ethnic Ministry * What do you think about the idea of planting online churches by zoom and other digital platforms? Crosstabulation						
			What do you think about the idea of planting online churches by zoom and other digital platforms?			Total
			I don't know	I think its an excellent idea and I woud like to give it a try	I don't think it will work	
English	Count		19	59	2	80
	% within Ethnic Ministry		23.8%	73.8%	2.5%	100.0%
	% within What do you think about the idea of planting online churches by zoom and other digital platforms?		37.3%	24.3%	18.2%	26.2%
Hispanic	Count		20	153	6	179
	% within Ethnic Ministry		11.2%	85.5%	3.4%	100.0%
	% within What do you think about the idea of planting online churches by zoom and other digital platforms?		39.2%	63.0%	54.5%	58.7%
Multi-Ethnic	Count		7	25	3	35
	% within Ethnic Ministry		20.0%	71.4%	8.6%	100.0%
	% within What do you think about the idea of planting online churches by zoom and other digital platforms?		13.7%	10.3%	27.3%	11.5%
Franco-Haitian	Count		3	4	0	7
	% within Ethnic Ministry		42.9%	57.1%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within What do you think about the idea of planting online churches by zoom and other digital platforms?		5.9%	1.6%	0.0%	2.3%
Korean	Count		2	2	0	4
	% within Ethnic Ministry		50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within What do you think about the idea of planting online churches by zoom and other digital platforms?		3.9%	0.8%	0.0%	1.3%
Total	Count		51	243	11	305
	% within Ethnic Ministry		16.7%	79.7%	3.6%	100.0%
	% within What do you think about the idea of planting online churches by zoom and other digital platforms?		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table No. 20 notifies that 76.1% (n=229) of all the cases would help to plant another church if asked. Among that significant group, 79.2% (n=118) are male, and 73.8% (n=111) are female. It means that men and women are equally eager to help. A tiny 2% (n=6) think they would not accept the challenge, and 21.9% (n=66) do not know.

Table No. 20  
Sex by the favorability to support another church planting project

Sex * If I were asked to be part of another church planting project Crosstabulation						
		If I were asked to be part of another church planting project				
			I would do it gladly	I don't think I would accept the challenge	I do not know	Total
Sex	Male	Count	118	3	28	149
		% within Sex	79.2%	2.0%	18.8%	100.0%
		% within If I were asked to be part of another church planting project	51.5%	50.0%	42.4%	49.5%
		% of Total	39.2%	1.0%	9.3%	49.5%
	Female	Count	111	3	38	152
		% within Sex	73.0%	2.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within If I were asked to be part of another church planting project	48.5%	50.0%	57.6%	50.5%
		% of Total	36.9%	1.0%	12.6%	50.5%
	Total	Count	229	6	66	301
		% within Sex	76.1%	2.0%	21.9%	100.0%
% within If I were asked to be part of another church planting project		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
% of Total		76.1%	2.0%	21.9%	100.0%	

Table No. 21 shows the members' experiences with zoom and other platforms during the pandemic. It reveals that 52.3% (n=159) evaluated it as very positive and 31.9%(n=97) positive. Only 15.8% (n=48) feels neutral about it, and among them, the biggest age group is 45-54, with 44.9% (n=22).

The Covid 19 experience showed us the many possibilities of the digital world to expand the gospel. It is evident that not been able to congregate is challenging. Peter Whener expresses after he asked several theologians and ministers how they are processing this moment:

There is a fundamental challenge to church work when the assembly cannot assemble, "the Rev. Chris Davis of Groveton Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., told me." The 59 'one another' commands of the New Testament — love one another, forgive one another, rejoice with one another, bear with one another — show how deep and rich the relationships in the church are intended to be. As wonderful as Zoom, Facebook Live, and texting are, they cannot facilitate the kind of interactions necessary for such relationships.<sup>190</sup>

In the meantime, the church has to move on, and meanwhile, technology seems to be a phenomenal option. As sociologists say, there is new normality, and the virtual meetings came to linger, if not with the same intensity as in quarantine, at least as a part of the habits, especially in big cities.

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<sup>190</sup> Wehner, Peter. "How Should Christians Act During a Pandemic?" The New York Times. The New York Times, April 10, 2020. Last modified April 10, 2020. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/10/opinion/sunday/covid-easter-christians.html>.

Table No. 21

Sex by experience with the on-line services through zoom and other platforms

<b>Sex * My experience with the online services through zoom or others platforms has been</b>						
<b>Crosstabulation</b>						
			My experience with the online services through zoom or others platforms has been			Total
			Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	
Sex	Male	Count	81	45	24	150
		% within Sex	54.0%	30.0%	16.0%	100.0%
		% within My experience with the online services through zoom or others platforms has been	50.9%	46.4%	50.0%	49.3%
		% of Total	26.6%	14.8%	7.9%	49.3%
	Female	Count	78	52	24	154
		% within Sex	50.6%	33.8%	15.6%	100.0%
		% within My experience with the online services through zoom or others platforms has been	49.1%	53.6%	50.0%	50.7%
		% of Total	25.7%	17.1%	7.9%	50.7%
Total		Count	159	97	48	304
		% within Sex	52.3%	31.9%	15.8%	100.0%
		% within My experience with the online services through zoom or others platforms has been	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	52.3%	31.9%	15.8%	100.0%

Table No. 22 reports that 71.6% (n=212) believe small churches are more mission-minded than bigger ones. In the case of the Hispanics, the percentage rises to 77.8% (n=137). In general, only 4.4% (n=13) think small churches are less mission-minded, and 24% (n=71) indicates it is the same. The most influential group with these beliefs are Hispanics, with 50.7% (n=36) and English, with 31% (n=22)

As far back as 1987, in his article, *The Small Church Advantage*, Ministry Magazine published: "Small churches are more flexible and adapt more quickly to emergencies than do large churches. It is the principle of inertia. An ocean liner simply cannot turn as quickly as a rowboat. Knowing and using this fact can make your church effective in ways that would be difficult for a large church."<sup>191</sup> Today a simple internet search seems to confirm that theory.

Table No. 22  
Ethnic Ministry by Efficiency of Small Churches

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<sup>191</sup> "The Small Church Advantage." Ministry Magazine. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1987/03/the-small-church-advantage>.



**Ethnic Ministry \* In my experience small churches are: Crosstabulation**

			In my experience small churches are:			
			More missionaries than the big churches	Less missionaries	It is the same	Total
Ethnic Ministry	English	Count	47	4	22	73
		% within Ethnic Ministry	64.4%	5.5%	30.1%	100.0%
		% within In my experience small churches are:	22.2%	30.8%	31.0%	24.7%
		% of Total	15.9%	1.4%	7.4%	24.7%
	Hispanic	Count	137	3	36	176
		% within Ethnic Ministry	77.8%	1.7%	20.5%	100.0%
		% within In my experience small churches are:	64.6%	23.1%	50.7%	59.5%
		% of Total	46.3%	1.0%	12.2%	59.5%
	Multi-Ethnic	Count	22	6	8	36
		% within Ethnic Ministry	61.1%	16.7%	22.2%	100.0%
		% within In my experience small churches are:	10.4%	46.2%	11.3%	12.2%
		% of Total	7.4%	2.0%	2.7%	12.2%
	Franco-Haitian	Count	4	0	3	7
		% within Ethnic Ministry	57.1%	0.0%	42.9%	100.0%
		% within In my experience small churches are:	1.9%	0.0%	4.2%	2.4%
		% of Total	1.4%	0.0%	1.0%	2.4%
	Korean	Count	2	0	2	4
		% within Ethnic Ministry	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within In my experience small churches are:	0.9%	0.0%	2.8%	1.4%
		% of Total	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	1.4%
Total	Count		212	13	71	296
	% within Ethnic Ministry		71.6%	4.4%	24.0%	100.0%
	% within In my experience small churches are:		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total		71.6%	4.4%	24.0%	100.0%

Table No. 23 closes this section confirming the 72.1% (n=215) of the churches' leaders dream of planting other churches. The GNYC is moving toward a culture of multiplication. Vision is critical to fulfilling the mission. It was a vision that draws Johnny Appleseed to spread his plants, and today we all benefit. Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 28:19). Moreover, yes, church planting is a prophetic vision.

Table No. 23  
Sex by the dream of the leaders to plant other churches

Sex * The leaders of our church dream of planting other churches					
Crosstabulation					
			The leaders of our church dream of planting other churches		
			Yes	No	Total
Sex	Male	Count	114	33	147
		% within Sex	77.6%	22.4%	100.0%
		% within The leaders of our church dream of planting other churches	53.0%	39.8%	49.3%
		% of Total	38.3%	11.1%	49.3%
	Female	Count	101	50	151
		% within Sex	66.9%	33.1%	100.0%
		% within The leaders of our church dream of planting other churches	47.0%	60.2%	50.7%
		% of Total	33.9%	16.8%	50.7%
	Total	Count	215	83	298
		% within Sex	72.1%	27.9%	100.0%
		% within The leaders of our church dream of planting other churches	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	72.1%	27.9%	100.0%

## **Spiritual health of the potential planters**

The third and fourth empirical questions read: 1) How strong is the spiritual health of the future planters? And 2) How vibrant is the SDA missionary culture among the pastors and parishioners? These questions are vital since they will help assess the suitability of the planters in terms of spiritual life and missional habits. A vigorous church plant usually is the result of a strong core team. A critical path to success in church planting is to prioritize the church planters. This section intends to answer these topics. The researcher will explore the following indicators:

- Feel loved in the local church
- We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders
- Inspiring worship service
- Care about new believers
- Giving at least one Bible Study
- Active member of a small group
- Impacting the community
- Use of the cellphone and social media to share the faith

Table No. 24 shows how members feel in their local churches, and a healthy 94.4% (n=285) indicates that they feel loved, which is speaks volumes about themselves; 5.6% (n=17) said they do not feel loved, which is sad, even 1% would be sad. The highest figure occurs among the Multi-Ethnic sector, with 14.3% (n=5) out of 17 cases. I should be explored.

Table No. 24  
Ethnic Ministries by I feel love in my local church

Ethnic Ministry * I feel love in my local church Crosstabulation					
Ethnic Ministry	English	Count	I feel love in my local church		Total
			Yes	No	
		Count	72	5	77
		% within Ethnic Ministry	93.5%	6.5%	100.0%
		% within I feel love in my local church	25.3%	29.4%	25.5%
		% of Total	23.8%	1.7%	25.5%
	Hispanic	Count	172	7	179
		% within Ethnic Ministry	96.1%	3.9%	100.0%
		% within I feel love in my local church	60.4%	41.2%	59.3%
		% of Total	57.0%	2.3%	59.3%
	Multi-Ethnic	Count	30	5	35
		% within Ethnic Ministry	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
		% within I feel love in my local church	10.5%	29.4%	11.6%
		% of Total	9.9%	1.7%	11.6%
	Franco-Haitian	Count	7	0	7
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within I feel love in my local church	2.5%	0.0%	2.3%
		% of Total	2.3%	0.0%	2.3%
	Korean	Count	4	0	4
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within I feel love in my local church	1.4%	0.0%	1.3%
		% of Total	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Total		Count	285	17	302
		% within Ethnic Ministry	94.4%	5.6%	100.0%
		% within I feel love in my local church	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	94.4%	5.6%	100.0%

Table No. 25 informs that 86.7% (n=260) feel the spiritual support of their pastors and leaders, while 13.3% (n=40) do not. Among the Multi- Ethnics, 28% (n=7) said yes, and 20% (n=7) no. Among the English, 84.2% (n=64) said yes, and 15.8% (n=12) no, and among the Hispanics, 88.2% (n=21) said yes, and 11.2% no. In general, the judgment is positive. However, careful attention should be given to the Multi-Ethnics, as stated. Interestingly, among the pastors, the answers were 94.6% (n=53) yes, and 5.4% (n=3) no. Finally, among the youth, 79.5% (n=31) answered yes, and 20.5% (n=8) said no, here we need special care also.

Table No. 25

Ethnic Ministries by we feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders

<b>Ethnic Ministry * We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders Crosstabulation</b>					
Ethnic Ministry	English		We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders		Total
			Yes	No	
Ethnic Ministry	English	Count	64	12	76
		% within Ethnic Ministry	84.2%	15.8%	100.0%
		% within We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders	24.6%	30.0%	25.3%
		% of Total	21.3%	4.0%	25.3%
	Hispanic	Count	157	21	178
		% within Ethnic Ministry	88.2%	11.8%	100.0%
		% within We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders	60.4%	52.5%	59.3%
		% of Total	52.3%	7.0%	59.3%
	Multi-Ethnic	Count	28	7	35
		% within Ethnic Ministry	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders	10.8%	17.5%	11.7%
		% of Total	9.3%	2.3%	11.7%
	Franco-Haitian	Count	7	0	7
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders	2.7%	0.0%	2.3%
		% of Total	2.3%	0.0%	2.3%
	Korean	Count	4	0	4
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders	1.5%	0.0%	1.3%
		% of Total	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Total		Count	260	40	300
		% within Ethnic Ministry	86.7%	13.3%	100.0%
		% within We feel the spiritual support of our pastors and leaders	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	86.7%	13.3%	100.0%

Table No. 26 asserts that 90.3% (n=270) said their worship service was inspiring, while 9.7% (n=29) said not. Among the pastors 89.3% (n=50) responded yes and 10.7% (n=6) no. Among the youth 79.5% (n=31) answered yes and 20.5% (n=8) no. Special attention should be given to the youth in this regard too. D. A. Carson once said: *“Worship is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all*

*honor and worth to their Creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delightfully so.”*

*inspiring worship is also one of the eight qualitatives characteristic mentioned by*

*Christian Schwartz.*

Table No. 26  
Ethnic Ministries by inspiring worship services

Ethnic Ministry * Our worship service is inspiring Crosstabulation					
		Our worship service is inspiring			
		Yes	No	Total	
Ethnic Ministry	English	Count	64	11	75
		% within Ethnic Ministry	85.3%	14.7%	100.0%
		% within Our worship service is inspiring	23.7%	37.9%	25.1%
		% of Total	21.4%	3.7%	25.1%
	Hispanic	Count	165	13	178
		% within Ethnic Ministry	92.7%	7.3%	100.0%
		% within Our worship service is inspiring	61.1%	44.8%	59.5%
		% of Total	55.2%	4.3%	59.5%
	Multi-Ethnic	Count	30	5	35
		% within Ethnic Ministry	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
		% within Our worship service is inspiring	11.1%	17.2%	11.7%
		% of Total	10.0%	1.7%	11.7%
	Franco-Haitian	Count	7	0	7
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Our worship service is inspiring	2.6%	0.0%	2.3%
		% of Total	2.3%	0.0%	2.3%
	Korean	Count	4	0	4
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Our worship service is inspiring	1.5%	0.0%	1.3%
		% of Total	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Total		Count	270	29	299
		% within Ethnic Ministry	90.3%	9.7%	100.0%
		% within Our worship service is inspiring	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	90.3%	9.7%	100.0%

Table No. 27 states that all the churches across the Ethnic Ministries care about the new believers. The positives answers are 91.5% (n=268) versus 8.5% (n=25) negatives. It is a good sign of a good spiritual environment. It does not mean there are not challenges. Even 1% is high, but statically speaking, numbers are encouraging.

Table No. 27  
Ethnic Ministries by care about the new believers

Ethnic Ministry * My church cares about the new believers Crosstabulation					
Ethnic Ministry	English		My church cares about the new believers		Total
			Yes	No	
Ethnic Ministry	English	Count	66	6	72
		% within Ethnic Ministry	91.7%	8.3%	100.0%
		% within My church cares about the new believers	24.6%	24.0%	24.6%
		% of Total	22.5%	2.0%	24.6%
	Hispanic	Count	161	15	176
		% within Ethnic Ministry	91.5%	8.5%	100.0%
		% within My church cares about the new believers	60.1%	60.0%	60.1%
		% of Total	54.9%	5.1%	60.1%
	Multi-Ethnic	Count	30	4	34
		% within Ethnic Ministry	88.2%	11.8%	100.0%
		% within My church cares about the new believers	11.2%	16.0%	11.6%
		% of Total	10.2%	1.4%	11.6%
	Franco-Haitian	Count	7	0	7
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within My church cares about the new believers	2.6%	0.0%	2.4%
		% of Total	2.4%	0.0%	2.4%
	Korean	Count	4	0	4
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within My church cares about the new believers	1.5%	0.0%	1.4%
		% of Total	1.4%	0.0%	1.4%
Total		Count	268	25	293
		% within Ethnic Ministry	91.5%	8.5%	100.0%
		% within My church cares about the new believers	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	91.5%	8.5%	100.0%

Table No. 28 starts to explore the SDA missionary culture. The first question asks if respondents are giving at least one Bible Study. 56% (n=168) said yes and 44% (n=132) no. This indicator confirms an old suspicion; we have lost the culture of personal evangelism, which is key for church planting. Among the English Ministry, the negative answers represent 56.6% (n=43). It is interesting that among the pastors, 12.5% (n=7) said no; among the elders, 37.7% (n=20) said no, and among the Personal Ministries leaders, 40% (n=8) also said no. It is a critical factor to pay attention to.

Table No. 28  
Ethnic Ministries by giving at least one Bible Study

Ethnic Ministry * I am giving at least one Bible Study Crosstabulation					
			I am giving at least one Bible Study		
			Yes	No	Total
Ethnic Ministry	English	Count	33	43	76
		% within Ethnic Ministry	43.4%	56.6%	100.0%
		% within I am giving at least one Bible Study	19.6%	32.6%	25.3%
		% of Total	11.0%	14.3%	25.3%
	Hispanic	Count	105	73	178
		% within Ethnic Ministry	59.0%	41.0%	100.0%
		% within I am giving at least one Bible Study	62.5%	55.3%	59.3%
		% of Total	35.0%	24.3%	59.3%
	Multi-Ethnic	Count	23	12	35
		% within Ethnic Ministry	65.7%	34.3%	100.0%
		% within I am giving at least one Bible Study	13.7%	9.1%	11.7%
		% of Total	7.7%	4.0%	11.7%
	Franco-Haitian	Count	3	4	7
		% within Ethnic Ministry	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
		% within I am giving at least one Bible Study	1.8%	3.0%	2.3%
		% of Total	1.0%	1.3%	2.3%
	Korean	Count	4	0	4
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within I am giving at least one Bible Study	2.4%	0.0%	1.3%
		% of Total	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Total	Count	168	132	300	
	% within Ethnic Ministry	56.0%	44.0%	100.0%	
	% within I am giving at least one Bible Study	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	56.0%	44.0%	100.0%	

Table No. 29 reveals another key component of the missional culture: to be part of a small evangelist group. The total counts indicate that 62.5% (n=168) responded yes and 37.5% (n=101) said no. It is important because small groups are normally the anteroom of the new church plants. Holistic small groups are another of the characteristics of healthy churches.



Table No. 29  
Ethnic Ministries by being an active member of a small group

<b>Sex * I am an active member of a small group Crosstabulation</b>					
		I am an active member of a small group			
		Yes	No	Total	
Sex	Male	Count	83	49	132
		% within Sex	62.9%	37.1%	100.0%
		% within I am an active member of a small group	49.4%	48.5%	49.1%
		% of Total	30.9%	18.2%	49.1%
	Female	Count	85	52	137
		% within Sex	62.0%	38.0%	100.0%
		% within I am an active member of a small group	50.6%	51.5%	50.9%
		% of Total	31.6%	19.3%	50.9%
Total		Count	168	101	269
		% within Sex	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%
		% within I am an active member of a small group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%

Table No. 30 verifies that 81.6% (n=244) believe their churches positively impact the community versus 18.4% (n=55) think they are not. It is significant for the church planting movement since the vision is to plant community churches. It is churches that serve their communities.

Table No. 30

Ethnic Ministries by our church is impacting positively the community

Ethnic Ministry * Our church is positively impacting the community Crosstabulation					
Ethnic Ministry			Our church is positively impacting the community		Total
			Yes	No	
Ethnic Ministry	English	Count	57	17	74
		% within Ethnic Ministry	77.0%	23.0%	100.0%
		% within Our church is positively impacting the community	23.4%	30.9%	24.7%
		% of Total	19.1%	5.7%	24.7%
	Hispanic	Count	151	28	179
		% within Ethnic Ministry	84.4%	15.6%	100.0%
		% within Our church is positively impacting the community	61.9%	50.9%	59.9%
		% of Total	50.5%	9.4%	59.9%
	Multi-Ethnic	Count	26	9	35
		% within Ethnic Ministry	74.3%	25.7%	100.0%
		% within Our church is positively impacting the community	10.7%	16.4%	11.7%
		% of Total	8.7%	3.0%	11.7%
	Franco-Haitian	Count	6	1	7
		% within Ethnic Ministry	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
		% within Our church is positively impacting the community	2.5%	1.8%	2.3%
		% of Total	2.0%	0.3%	2.3%
	Korean	Count	4	0	4
		% within Ethnic Ministry	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Our church is positively impacting the community	1.6%	0.0%	1.3%
		% of Total	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Total		Count	244	55	299
		% within Ethnic Ministry	81.6%	18.4%	100.0%
		% within Our church is positively impacting the community	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	81.6%	18.4%	100.0%

Table No. 31 brings excellent news to the digital and church planting movements since 87.9% (n=268) of the cases affirm to use their phone and social media to share their faith versus 12.1% (n=37) that say they do not. It brings hope!

Table No. 31

Ethnic Ministries by use of the phone and social media to share the faith

Ethnic Ministry * I use my phone and the social media to share my faith Crosstabulation					
Ethnic Ministry			I use my phone and the social media to share my faith		Total
			Yes	No	
Ethnic Ministry	English	Count	66	12	78
		% within Ethnic Ministry	84.6%	15.4%	100.0%
		% within I use my phone and the social media to share my faith	24.6%	32.4%	25.6%
		% of Total	21.6%	3.9%	25.6%
	Hispanic	Count	164	17	181
		% within Ethnic Ministry	90.6%	9.4%	100.0%
		% within I use my phone and the social media to share my faith	61.2%	45.9%	59.3%
		% of Total	53.8%	5.6%	59.3%
	Multi-Ethnic	Count	29	6	35
		% within Ethnic Ministry	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%
		% within I use my phone and the social media to share my faith	10.8%	16.2%	11.5%
		% of Total	9.5%	2.0%	11.5%
	Franco-Haitian	Count	6	1	7
		% within Ethnic Ministry	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
		% within I use my phone and the social media to share my faith	2.2%	2.7%	2.3%
		% of Total	2.0%	0.3%	2.3%
	Korean	Count	3	1	4
		% within Ethnic Ministry	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within I use my phone and the social media to share my faith	1.1%	2.7%	1.3%
		% of Total	1.0%	0.3%	1.3%
Total		Count	268	37	305
		% within Ethnic Ministry	87.9%	12.1%	100.0%
		% within I use my phone and the social media to share my faith	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	87.9%	12.1%	100.0%

I think the following assessment addressing this issue is a fair way to close this section

Despite the popularity of the Internet, many churches still refuse to get online. However, your members are online. Potential members are online. People who cannot attend church but want to are online. You can see the pattern here. Currently, 57% of the world uses the Internet, and 45% of the population uses social media. 3.4 billion people are using social media regularly. That is too large of a number to ignore. In just a single year, social media users increased by over 288 million. 83% of North America uses social media. Social media users spend 50% of their online time using social media and streaming video. Of course, it should not surprise you that younger users prefer online content. This means if your church is not online, they probably will not engage with you at all. It is better to spend your marketing time on a strategy that will reach the most people. It is

not just young people using the Internet and social media. People from all generations use it.<sup>192</sup>

## Summary

Once the sample's position was obtained, the researcher proceeded to list the main findings.

### Frequencies and crosstabs of the demographic and level of participation's variables:

- 49.4% (n=155) of the sample are male and the 50.6% (n= 159) are female.
- Age groups between 25 – 64 represent 83.7% of the cases.
- The mean of the participants' year in the church is 28.593. The oldest person is 70 and the youngest 2. The median is 36. It means half of the cases are over, and a half under that ages.
- The 18.2 % (n=57) are pastors and the 81.1% (n=256) are lay-people. The next two biggest subgroups are elders with 17.3% (n=54) and the youth with 12.8% (n=40).
- The groups better represented are Hispanics with 59.3% (n=185), English with 25.6% (n=80), and Multi-Ethnic with 11.5% (n=36). The Franco-Haitians are significantly underrepresented, and the Koreans are fairly represented. The higher number of Hispanics matches their enthusiasm for church planting. The survey was provided in English and Spanish.
- The pastors are 98.2 % (n=54) male and 1.8% (n=1) female. The elders are 84.9% (n=45) male and 15.1% (n=8) female. Table No. 12 shows that the Hispanic Ministry is by far the more trained in church planting. They represent 58.9% (n=116) out of the participants in 1-3 events (n=197). This pattern is repeated in all the subsequent digits.

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<sup>192</sup> Jodee, Thomas Costello, Ken Kroohs, Ambani Ndou, and Lynda Turner. “14 Church Statistics You Need to Know For 2020.” REACHRIGHT. Last modified June 25, 2020. Accessed January 6, 2021. <https://reachrightstudios.com/church-statistics-2020/>

- The age groups more trained in church planting are 35-44 with a 70.1 % (n=47) out of 67 cases, followed by 45-54 with 66.7% (n=54) out of 81 and 55-64 with a 67.6% (n=48) out of 71.
- 40.5% (n=49) of the males and 59.5% (n=72) of the females have never help to plant a church. It means that 39% (n=21) of the constituents are inexperienced, but a lovely 61% are either experienced or well-experienced.

### **Constituents' attitudes toward on-line church planting**

- 58% (n=150) of the cases, men and women, are willing to plant three or more churches. Only a tiny 3.43% (n=11) is not committed to the vision. This is the first reliable indicator of a favorable attitude toward church planting in general. It is essential to highlight that 12.8% (n=10) of the pastors are enthusiastic to plant one church; 20% (n=13) 2; 21.5% (n=32) 3 or more, and only one pastor is hesitant to plant.
- The indicator *churches planted* correlates positively with *willingness to plant*. A coefficient of .105 speaks of a small correlation, but the  $0.38 < 0.05$  specify that it is significant at the level of 0.05. It is great since it informs about experienced people willing to bring their experience into the future. This info is relevant for future studies and possible hypotheses.
- Church planting is a blessing for everybody, no doubt. In English Ministry, 53.9% (n=41) has affirmed that to be part of a small church planting project has positively impacted their lives, followed by a 46.1% (n=35) that stated it does not apply to me. It is imperative to say that nobody in any sector expressed to be impacted negatively. Remarkably, 72.6% (n=127) and 75.0% (n=3) assured they were impacted positively among the Hispanic and the Korean communities. It is also striking the 66.7% of the Multi-Ethnic (n=24) and the 57.1% of the Franco- Haitian.

- Church planting has been a blessing for the families also. As can be noticed, only 1.5 (n=3) % among those who affirmed to be blessed positively says that their families
- The idea of planting on-line churches by zoom and other digital platforms is welcome across the Ministries. The 85.5% (n=153) of the Hispanics, follows by the 73.8% (n=59) of the English, the 71.4% (n=25) of the Multi-Ethnic, the 57.1% of the Franco- Haitian and the 50 % (n=2) of the Korean support the idea and are willing to give it a try. It is critical that only 3.6% (n=11) think it will not work, which whom more than half are age 55 or more. The rest, 16.7% (n=51), said they do not know. The general approval rate is 79.73% (n=243)
- 76.1% (n=229) of all the cases would help to plant another church if asked. A tiny 2% (n=6) think they would not accept the challenge, and 21.9% (n=66) do not know.
- 52.3% (n=159) evaluated as very positive their experience with zoom and other digital platforms and 31.9% (n=97) as positive. Only 15.8% (n=48) feels neutral about it. Among the neutral, the biggest age group is 45-54, with 44.9% (n=22). The Covid 19 experience shows us the many possibilities of the digital world to expand the gospel
- 71.6% (n=212) believe small churches are more mission-minded than bigger ones. In the case of the Hispanics, the percentage rises to 77.8% (n=137). In general, only 4.4% (n=13) think small churches are less mission-minded, and 24% (n=71) indicates it is the same. The most influential groups with these beliefs are Hispanics, with 50.7% (n=36) and English, with 31% (n=22).

## **Spiritual health of the potential planters**

- A healthy 94.4% (n=285) indicates that they feel the love in their local churches, which is tremendous and speaks volumes about themselves. Only 5.6% (n=17) say that they do not feel love. This last category's highest figure occurs among the Multi-Ethnic sector, with 14.3% (n=5) out of 17 cases.
- 86.7% (n=260) of the sample feel the spiritual support of their pastors and leaders, while 13.3% (n=40) do not. Among the Multi- Ethnics, 28% (n=7) said yes, and 20% (n=7) no. Among the English, 84.2% (n=64) said yes, and 15.8% (n=12) no, and among the Hispanics, 88.2% (n=21) said yes, and 11.2% no. In general, the valuation is positive. However, careful attention should be given to the Multi-Ethnics. Interestingly, among the pastors, the answers were 94.6% (n=53) yes, and 5.4% (n=3) no. Finally, among the youth, 79.5% (n=31) answered yes, and 20.5% (n=8) said no, here we need special care also.
- 90.3% (n=270) says their worship services are inspiring, while 9.7% (n=29) say they are not. Among the pastors 89.3% (n=50) responds yes and 10.7% (n=6) says no. Among the youth 79.5% (n=31) says yes and 20.5% (n=8) no. Special attention should be given to the youth in this regard too.
- All the churches care about the new believers. The positives answers are 91.5% (n=268) versus 8.5% (n=25) negatives. It is a good sign of a good spiritual environment.

- When asked if they are giving at least one Bible Study. 56% (n=168) said yes and 44% (n=132) no. This indicator confirms an old suspicion; we have lost the culture of personal evangelism, which is key for church planting. Among the English Ministry, the negative answers represent 56.6% (n=43). It is interesting that among the pastors, 12.5% (n=7) said no; among the elders, 37.7% (n=20) said no, and among the Personal Ministries, 40% (n=8) also said no. It is a critical factor to attend.
- 62.5% (n=168) responded they are active members of a small group and 37.5% (n=101) said no. It is important because small groups are normally the anteroom of the new church plants.
- 81.6% (n=244) believe their churches positively impact the community, versus 18.4% (n=55) think they are not.
- 87.9% (268) of the cases affirm to use their phone and social media to share their faith versus 12.1% (n=37) that say they do not. It brings hope!

## **Financial and Membership Assessment**

The researcher found out that of the 43 new congregations studied, 19 (n=44.18%) sent their remittances directly to the Conference, for a total of \$US 652,330.58 in tithes in 2019. The referred congregations are listed below:

Table No. 32  
Churches that sent remittances directly to GNYC in 2019



No.	Church Plant	Ministry	Status
1	Pelham Parkway SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Church
2	Misericordia SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
3	Sp. Mount Sinai SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
4	Sp. Mourning Side SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
5	Oasis de Esperanza	Hispanic Ministries	Company
6	Maranata Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
7	La Paz SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Church
8	Shirley Fr. SDA Church	Franco-Haitian M.	Company
9	Bronx Franco Haitian SDA Church	Franco-Haitian M.	Company
10	Temple Apocalypse Fr SDA Company	Franco-Haitian M.	Company
11	Sion Fr	Franco-Haitian M.	Group
12	Long Island Korean SDA Church	Korean Ministries	Company
13	NY Filipino SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Church
14	Suffern Living Waters SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
15	Richmond Hill Southern Asian	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
16	Croton Falls SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
17	Queens International Filipino SDA	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
18	Brooklyn Ghana SDA Fellowship	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
19	Long Island Multi E. Group	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Standby

13.95% (n=6) out of the 43 should be sending by know they remittances directly also, because as companies or churches are authorized to open bank accounts.

Table No. 33  
Churches to be encouraged to send their remittances directly to GNYC

No.	Church Plant	Ministry	Status
1	Manantial de Vida SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Company
2	Bethany SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company
3	My Gen SDA Church	English Ministries	Company
4	Bethel Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Church
5	New Jerusalem Fr	Franco-Haitian M.	Company
6	Punjabi Southern Asian SDA	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Company

27.90% (n=12) of the church plants reviewed have group status and send their remittances through the mother churches, so their 2019 incomes are not reflected in the GNYC reports. About 50% (n=6) of those churches are ready to be recommended as companies by their pastors and Ethnic Ministries.

Table No. 34  
Congregations with group status that send their tithes through the mother church

No.	Church Plant	Ministry	Status
1	Luz y Esperanza SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group
2	138th SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group
3	Wappingers Falls Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group
4	Canaan Sp. SDA	Hispanic Ministries	Group
5	Inwood Sp.	Hispanic Ministries	Group
6	Ambassadors SDA Church	English Ministries	Group
7	Antioche Fr	Franco-Haitian M.	Group
8	Shekinah Bilingual SDA Church	Franco-Haitian M.	Group
9	Throgs Neck Multi-Purpose Center	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Group
10	Gun Hill Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group
11	Arca de Salvación	Hispanic Ministries	Group
12	Spanish Hyde Park SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Group

13.95% (n=6) presented different issues. One in the Bronx went to a sister Conference, one in Staten Island closed after a year, two failed before the launching, and two closed within a year.

Table No. 35  
Special cases

No.	Church Plant	Ministry	Status
1	Renacer	Hispanic Ministries	NE Conf
2	Park Hill, Sp. SDA Church	Hispanic Ministries	Closed
3	City of Refuge SDA Church	English Ministry	Closed
4	Bridge SDA Church	English Ministries	Failed
5	Manhattan Chinese SDA Church	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Closed
6	Hudson Project	Multi-Ethnic Ministries	Failed

In terms of membership, the researcher found that at the end of 2019, most baptisms had still been reported through the mother churches. It makes it impossible to scale because the researcher is only going by official records. It will generate recommendations in that sense and can also be the topic of future research. Sixteen congregations reported directly to Secretariat some of their baptisms, but it is clear that even those are incomplete.

### Recommendations

- Launch the on-line institute for church planters.
- Keep training the pastors and laypeople in digital evangelism.
- Help the small churches to be appropriately equipped for their live stream.
- Promote a multiplication culture at such a level that our churches keep multiplying at least every 3-4 years.
- Start a large-scale on-line church planting pilot project to equip planters on the basics of on-line broadcasts.
- Facilitates models of practical- inspiring on-line worships.

- Design a strategy to integrate more young people into the vision of planting on-line churches.
- Promote conversations with young people that encourage intergeneration active listening.
- Dig deeper by Ethnic Ministries into the indicators: I feel loved in my local church, and my church worship is inspiring.
- Strengthen the financial system of the small churches.
- Make sure every new church plant is appropriately registered in Secretariat.
- Promote that groups and companies be promoted to the next organizational level as soon as they meet the criteria

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **PORTABLE TECHNOLOGY-BASED CHURCH PLANTING MULTIPLICATION MODEL**

This chapter details the portable technology-based church planting multiplication model designed. The researcher created this plan for the Greater New Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, but many of its principles can be adapted to other contexts.

#### **Principles**

1. Jesus is coming soon, and His Church in NY must make more significant efforts to fulfill the Great Commission.
2. The church planting component will play a vital role in the Loud Cry prophesied in Revelation 18. Adventism began as a church-planting movement and needed to regain that focus.
3. The continual planting of new congregations is the most productive evangelistic strategy for the growth of Christ's body.
4. One hundred churches are only another step on multiplying disciples, leaders, and churches in an effort to foster a 'culture of multiplication' that emulates the early church.

5. The church is people committed to God's mission! Not a building, not a religious organization, not an ecclesiastical institution, not a denomination, but the people of God. As Ralph More declares: "Churches are harvest points."<sup>193</sup>
6. Church health is measured by its sending capacity, not its sitting capacity. <sup>194</sup>
7. All churches are prominent in the eyes of God as long as they fulfill the Divine Commission.
8. Small Groups and Sabbath School Discipleship Units are critical in the church planting process.
9. NY is a symbol, and God will lead us to fulfill our privilege. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.'" (Zechariah 4:6)
10. Intentionality leads to effectiveness and accountability to efficiency.<sup>195</sup>

### **Biblical Foundation**

1. "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28: 18-20

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<sup>193</sup> See How to multiply your church by Ralph More

<sup>194</sup> Rick Warren

<sup>195</sup> "Efficiency is doing the things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things" Peter Drucker

2. “Then He said to His disciples, the harvest is truly plenteous, but the laborers are few, therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest.”  
Matthew 9:37-38
3. “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” Acts 9:31
4. “So, the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers” Acts 16:5
5. “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” Romans 10:14 – 15
6. Instead, as it is written: “Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.” Romans 15:21
7. <sup>3</sup> Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. <sup>4</sup> They risked their lives for me. Not only I but also all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. <sup>5</sup> Greet also the church that meets at their house.” Romans 16:3 - 5
8. “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.” Titus 1:5

## Spirit of Prophecy Foundation

1. “Upon all who believe, God has placed the burden of raising churches.”<sup>196</sup>
2. “We should seek in every place to raise a company of believers who will unite with us in uplifting the standard of truth and working for rich and poor. Then as churches are established, there will be an increase of helpers to labor for the needy and the outcast.”<sup>197</sup>
3. “From country to country and from city to city, Paul went, preaching of Christ and establishing churches. Wherever he could find a hearing, he labored to counterwork error and to turn the feet of men and women into the path of right. Those who by his labors in any place were led to accept Christ, he organized into a church. No matter how few they might be, this was done. And Paul did not forget the churches thus established. However, small a church might be; it was the object of his care and interest.”<sup>198</sup>
4. “I saw jets of light shining from cities and villages, and the high places and the low places of the earth. God’s word was obeyed, and as a result, there were memorials for Him in every city and village. His truth was proclaimed throughout the world.”<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry*. (California: Pacific Press, 1963) 315.

<sup>197</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*. (Washington Review & Herald, 1948) 436.

<sup>198</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*. (Rangoon: Kin Saung Press, 1965.) 310.

<sup>199</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol 9. (Pacific Press, 1885) 28-29.



5. “We shall not hover over the churches but press into new territory and raise the standard in places where the message has not been proclaimed.”<sup>200</sup>
6. “If the ministers would get out of the way, if they would go forth into new fields, the members would be obliged to bear responsibilities, and their capabilities would increase by use.”<sup>201</sup>

## **5 Strategic Goals**

1. Ingrain church planting in the DNA<sup>202</sup> of the GNYC as a vital evangelism strategy – goal focused on our fellow brothers and sisters.
2. Invite every pastor and church board to identify specifics unreached groups or areas and commit according to their possibilities to plant at least one new church within the next five years – goal focused on the unchurched.
3. Develop a strong team of Voluntary Church Planters (VCPs) to support the GNYC pastors and leadership in this vision – goal focused on the leadership.
4. Support GNYC Ministries in the launch and maturity of these new mission groups as they grow into companies and churches that plant more churches – goal focused on the multiplication process.

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<sup>200</sup> Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases, Nos. 97-1179. Vol. 17* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1986) 124.

<sup>201</sup> Ellen G. White, *Letter 56*, 1901.

<sup>202</sup> The deoxyribonucleic acid is the molecule that contains the genetic code of organisms.

5. Plant churches that reach people wherever they are, where the online gathering is as valid as the traditional one - goal focused on the online micro-church.

### **Breakdown**

#### **1. Ingrain church planting in the DNA of the GNYC members through:**

- Annual Church Planting Festival<sup>203</sup>
  - Add church planting as well as church growth tracts to attract larger crowds
  - Follow up immediately with those that decide to plant a church at each SEEDS conference, church planting festival and training
- Camp meetings
  - 30-45 minutes presentation and testimonies in the main session
  - Classes during the camp meetings to cast the vision for church planting and identify and equipping potential Voluntary Church Planters
  - Present the dream of youth becoming church planters
- Worker's meetings
  - 15-30-minute presentation and testimonies at all worker's meetings.
- Evangelism Strategic Committee and Executive Committee

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<sup>203</sup> The first was on November 2014, about 400 attendees

- Receive a report about the progress of this goal to reach 100 church plants each time the Evangelism Strategic Committee meets, and update the Executive Committee as required by the Administration
- Add a tab to the GNYC website about church planting
- Inform the entire constituency about the successful launch of each new church plant and all those that move to church status
- Enhance the Coaching Program and the Mentorship Program for pastors and Voluntary Church Planters
- Reinforce Coaching and Assessment Programs
  - Make use of resources like: The Elder Questionnaire, Disc Profile or the Myers & Briggs Personalities Types and APEST based on Ephesians 4:11 to assess the church planters
  - Make use of the platform *Mission InSite* to assess the community
  - Create the International GNYC team of Coaches and Mentors of Church Planters.
- Invite every Ethnic Ministry to set aside a specific amount of money to support each of its church planting projects
- Request exceptional support from the Atlantic Union, North American Division, and the General Conference to accomplish this goal
- Partner with the Planned Giving Department to identify and access other sources of funds to reach out to the minorities in NY through church planting.
- Partners with other ministries to speed the dissemination of the vision.

**2. Invite every pastor and church board to identify specific unreached groups or areas and commit according to their possibilities to plant at least one new church within the next five years.**

- Send letters to every pastor, elders, and church board to explain the vision.
- Visit fundamental churches and broadcast the vision in every significant event of the GNYC
- Use demographic research tools to identify potential locations to start new congregations
- Identify in the NY State map GNYC churches and the potential places to start a new congregation
- Create a slide and video presentation, handouts, and promotional materials for pastors to use in their churches to cast the vision for church planting.
- Invite qualifying churches to establish 2nd generation and bilingual church plants:
  - Work with the various language groups in GNYC to see the potential to establish 2nd generation church plants. The purpose will be to keep their children and grandchildren engaged in church while holding onto their cultural heritage.
- Identify cultures we have not reached in GNYC
  - Find newspapers, radio programs, stores, and restaurants that serve and are in the language of cultures not currently reached by GNYC
  - Contact Adventist churches, Conferences, Unions, and Divisions to see if they have connections to Adventists in GNYC
  - Find interpreters

- Build a system to train these groups on how to reach their communities
- Establish welcome teams for those immigrating or moving to the GNYC area.
- Invite specific churches to plant or to sponsor a new church in targeted locations.
- Identify church members of GNYC who are part of cultures present in NY but still unreached by GNYC

**3. Develop a strong team of Voluntary Church Planters (VCPs) to support the GNYC pastors and leadership in this vision.**

Voluntary Church Planters:

- Look for 70 leaders and entrepreneurs in our churches who support the GNYC church planting vision to be trained as Voluntary Church Planters. They should:
  - Have a healthy walk with God
  - Agree with and live by SDA doctrines
  - Be influencers in their cultural group
  - Have leadership skills
- VCPs will receive a refund per month up to US\$ 400.00. To qualify, they must:
  - Be appointed by the appropriate committee at GNYC
  - Maintain a strong relationship with Jesus
  - Meet the biblical requirements of elders
  - Support all decisions and directives of GNYC
  - Be the VCP of a congregation that meets GNYC's definition of a mission group, a company, or church
  - Attend an annual retreat for VCPs

- Attend the annual SEEDS conference of GNYC
  - Meet regularly with their GNYC coach pastor
- Each VCP must have planted or participated in planting the church that he or she directs.
- VCPs will be trained and sign an agreement that GNYC has authority over any groups or churches they lead and can make leadership changes at any time they deem prudent.
- No VCP will lead their church for more than five years.
- Every VCP must start a new congregation at least every four years.
- VCPs program is not a way to pursue immigration status in the USA
- VCPs program is not a back door for pursuing denominational employment.
- VCPs will be resourced with books, blogs, videos, and other tools to educate them on successful church planting.
- Each VCP must have a GNYC pastor coach meet in person or Skype / Zoom at least once per month.
- Each VCP must go through the Church Planting Assessment Process and have a Coach Assigned for at least six months.
- Every VCP should be a student or graduate of the Bible Institute/Permanent Institute of Missional Training (Spanish).
  - Training will include reading and assignments but will primarily focus on hands-on, on-the-job training

- Example: “Are You Called to Start New Churches?” and, “Equipping Church Members to Start a New Church,” and “Steps for Your Church to Give Birth to a New Church Plant.”
- No VCPs will serve as treasurer of the new church or involve managing money belonging to the members, the Church, or the Conference.
- The Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Director and the Strategic Evangelism Committee chairman will oversee the Mighty Movement GNYC - Project 100 and the VCPs.
- Two GNYC pastors, an English speaker, and a Hispanic speaker will be appointed as church planting associates to help run the vision.

Pastors Church Planters:

- Continue to partner with the Ethnic Ministries to financially sponsor pastors involved in planting to the annual Exponential Conference and the pre-conference session of Church Planter’s Exchange in FL
- Provide coaching and mentorship to GNYC pastors wanting to plant a new church. These sessions could be in person and Skype / Zoom.
- Offer one annually church planting training in addition to the Church Planting Festival.
- Develop cohorts of pastors planting around the same time frame
- Resource these pastors with books, blogs, videos, and other tools to educate them on successful church planting.

**4. Support GNYC Ministries in the launch and maturity of these new mission groups as they grow into companies and churches that plant more churches.**

- Ingrain church planting in every new mission group's DNA as a path to create a culture of multiplication.
- Support every mission group to become a company within two years and a church within four years.
- Every mission group will be assessed with the NCD tools within the first year.
- Mission Groups should be endorsed by one of the Ethnic Ministries and voted by ADCOM.
  - A minimum of 15 committed people is required for a new mission group to be recognized by GNYC
  - The corresponding Ministry should assess the core team of the new mission group with the support of the GNYC Personal Ministry and Sabbath School Departments
  - Every new Mission Group should have core values and a mission plan
  - Every New Mission Group should utilize small groups
  - Every New Mission Group should have a sponsoring mother church
  - Assessment, coaching, and mentoring will be critical components to establish and grow these churches.
- A directory of all of our Mission Groups should be made and a strategy employed to ensure they receive pertinent and useful information regularly from the Conference.
- It is suggested that Treasury reinforce the protocols for tithing and offering in these New Congregations.



- Procedures and paperwork will be prepared to track through the Ethnic Ministries the progress of each one of these new congregations.

**5. Plant churches that reach people wherever they are, where the online gathering is as valid as the traditional one.**

- Intentionally planting churches that work on digital platforms such as Zoom only and other hybrids that integrate both spaces (physical and virtual).
  - Assign each adult the digital mentoring of a young person.
4. Establish a digital assistance department (Dorcas) to assist parishioners who may need assistance with digital matters.
- Complement the virtual experience with strategic meetings in public places that do not require extra costs or rent.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES**

#### **The Process**

The Site Team did a great job assisting me in this assessment. The members involved were: Dr. Steve Cassimy, Dr. Samuel Peguero Colón and Pr. Herode Thomas. Special gratitude to Dr. Nicardo Delahaye, who, after the COVID 19 crisis, acted as an Ad hoc Site Team member, coaching the selection process.

On May 8, 2020, we started the evaluation. A second meeting was held on May 28, 2020, and the final in June 2020. Our joint agreement is as follow:

#### **The Assessments**

As Theologian pastor Rosario is solid. He holds a Bachelor of Theology and an MDiv. Also, as an ordained pastor, he has been teaching the Bible truths since 1998.

As Preacher and Interpreter of Sacred Texts, the same previous arguments are given. Pastor Rosario has been preaching since age 14. As part of his MDiv, he had to take one year of Greek and Hebrew languages, on top of the four Greeks he took in his bachelor's degree.

As a worship leader, pastor Rosario is average, but the team understands there are other priorities related to his gifts and vision of life.

As a religious leader, pastor Rosario is recognized as a strong spiritual leader. The same thing could be said of his qualities as a religious and spiritual educator and spiritual leader.

As a counselor and pastor, Rosario is a gifted servant of God. Having been a minister for over 22 years, he has gone through many training to strengthen these abilities.

As a professional, Rosario is accomplished, having different study careers in three other countries.

As an evangelist, Rosario is recognized as a gifted one. He has also led the Evangelism Department of the Greater NY Conference for the last six and a half years.

As financial management, pastor Rosario is well-known as the lead radio producer of Faith and Finances. He also was a Stewardship Director at a Conference level for almost three years in the Dominican Republic.

### **First Competency Development**

**I) PROPHETIC AGENT:** I am trying to change a tradition of decades. The idea is to bring back our early culture of multiplication, and that is a prophetic task. A prophet is one who foretells the truth more than the future. A prophet provides vision (heb. chazown), meaning revelation, since “where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained” (Proverbs 29:18). A prophet provides leadership. It is written: “By a prophet, the Lord brought Israel up from Egypt, and by a prophet, he was guarded.” (Hosea 12:13). Prophets are committed to change their world and environment.

**Goal:** Grow to the fullest the potential of a prophetic agent, latent in me, in the context of providing a vision that challenges the status quo, while I acquire the spiritual and technical tools to manage the challenges it brings.

**Strategy I:** I read the book the Forgotten Ways by Allan Hirsch to be better prepared for strategy No. 2 (see the book's review below)

**Strategy II:** I took the APEST test by Allan Hirsch and went through their assessment process. The APEST assessment is a profiling instrument designed to assist church leaders in finding their ministry style concerning the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4 (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, Teachers). It has emerged from over ten years of the practical application of this model in various ministry contexts. (see the book's report and the appendix D)

**Evaluation:** I went through the APEST vocational assessment and got the profile. Also, I provided a five-page report of the book 'The Forgotten Ways.' (Please, see appendix D)

## Review of the book the Forgotten Ways

### Introduction

In the *Forgotten Ways*, reactivating the missional Church, Alan Hirsch, provides the tools to go back to the great days of the Early Church. "The Forgotten Way is a return to properly functioning apostolic ministry (as described in Ephesians 4:11-17) that restores the Church's focus on God's mission of redemption. As a pastor of a congregation in Australia, Hirsch began to experiment with new forms of ministry in response to his Church's inability to create true disciples/Christ-followers. His journey began by answering how the early Church was so successful or "How did they do this?"<sup>204</sup>

Hirsch believes that discipleship is the key and proclaims that "Movements that seem to expand the church spontaneously were obsessed with discipleship." He integrates theology, sociology, and leadership in his writings and teachings and also puts superb efforts in connecting discipleship with spiritual disciplines.<sup>205</sup>

Hirsch is co-founder and faculty for the M.A. in Missional Church Movements at Wheaton College, Illinois. He is likewise an adjunct professor at Fuller Seminary and George Fox Seminary, among others, and he regularly lectures throughout Australia, Europe, and the United States. He is defined as an Australian author; nonetheless, he was

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<sup>204</sup> Schwiebert, ~ Mike. "Book Review: The Forgotten Ways by Alan Hirsch." *Technically Thinking*. Last modified February 8, 2013. Accessed December 20, 2020. <https://technicallythinking.org/2013/01/03/book-review-the-forgotten-ways-by-alan-hirsch/>.

<sup>205</sup> Eric Bryant, By, -, Eric Bryant <http://thesnippetapp.com/web/writers/EricMichaelBryantDr>. Eric Michael Bryant serves with Gateway Church in Austin as the team leader for Central and South Austin and as part of the teaching team. Last modified September 20, 2011. Accessed December 21, 2020. [https://churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-blogs/154625-eric\\_bryant\\_missional\\_discipleship\\_with\\_alan\\_hirsch.html](https://churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-blogs/154625-eric_bryant_missional_discipleship_with_alan_hirsch.html).

born into a Jewish family in Johannesburg, South Africa. He is likewise series editor for Baker Books' Shapevine series, IVP's Forge line, and an associate editor of Leadership Journal.

### Summary

Hirsch starts by quoting Hans Küng, who in his book, *the Church as the People of God*, affirms: "A church which pitches its tents without constantly looking out for new horizons, which does not continually strike camp, is being untrue to its calling... [We must] play down our longing for certainty, accept what is risky, and live by improvisation and experiment."<sup>206</sup>

With this powerful quote he goes straight to the point. He believes that the Church is facing challenging times and that the solutions provided are far from been enough. "According to his vision, "What we need now is a new set of tools. A new "paradigm"—a new vision of reality: a fundamental change in our thoughts, perceptions, and values, especially as they relate to our view of the Church and mission."<sup>207</sup>

Hirsch classifies his book as missional ecclesiology because it explores the nature of the Christian movements, and therefore the Church as Jesus and his mission shape it. For him, when the Church (the *ecclesia*) is true to its real calling when it is on about what God is on about, it is by far and away from the most potent force for transformational

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<sup>206</sup> Hirsch, Alan. *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*. (Winnipeg: Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, Alternate Formats Library, 2014) 15

<sup>207</sup> Hirsh, *The Forgotten Ways*, 17

change the world has ever seen. "This book is written in the hope that the Church in the West can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, arouse and reengage that fantastic power that lies within us."<sup>208</sup>

According to Hirsch, the Christian Church move from about 25,000 Christians by AD 100 to 20,000,000 by AD 310, so he wonders: "How did they do this? How did they grow from being a small movement to the most significant religious force in the Roman Empire in two centuries?" Delving into that question drove him to discover what he calls the Apostolic Genius (the built-in life force and guiding mechanism of God's people) and the living components or elements that make it up. These components he has tagged as missional DNA, or mDNA, for short.<sup>209</sup>

Hirsch also point out to the example of the underground church in China. He says:

About the time when Mao Tse-tung took power and initiated the systemic purge of religion from society, the church in China, which was well established and largely modeled on Western forms due to colonization, was estimated to number about 2 million adherents. As part of this systematic persecution, Mao banished all foreign missionaries and ministers, nationalized all church property, killed all the senior leaders, either killed or imprisoned all second- and third-level leaders, banned all public meetings of Christians with the threat of death or torture, and then proceeded to perpetrate one of the cruelest persecutions of Christians on historical record. The explicit aim of the Cultural Revolution was to obliterate Christianity (and all religion) from China. At the end of the reign of Mao and his system in the late seventies, they expected to find the church decimated and the disciples a weak and battered people. On the contrary, they discovered that

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<sup>208</sup> IDEM

<sup>209</sup> Hirsh, *The Forgotten Ways*, 18

Christianity had flourished beyond all imagination. The estimates *then* were about 60 million Christians in China and counting!<sup>210</sup>

Hirsch's thesis is straightforward. He wants to explore Apostolic Genius and interpret it for our missional context and situation in the West. "These two key examples (the early Church and the Chinese Church) have been chosen not only because they are genuinely remarkable movements, but also because one is ancient and the other contemporary, so we can observe Apostolic Genius in two radically different contexts."<sup>211</sup>

Hirsch codifies his strategic in what he calls mDNA, but what then is mDNA? The *m* is inserted purely to differentiate it from the biological version—it simply means *missional* DNA. So, what DNA does for biological systems, mDNA does for ecclesial ones. And with this metaphor he explains why the presence of a simple, intrinsic, reproducible, central guiding mechanism is necessary for the reproduction and sustainability of genuine missional movements.<sup>212</sup>

In his route map, the zone zero is Jesus. He says: "It is hard to determine where one inserts material that by its very nature is more than just an *element* of Apostolic Genius. All genuine Christian movements involve at their spiritual ground zero a living encounter with the One True God *through whom all things came and through whom we*

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<sup>210</sup> Hirsh, *The Forgotten Ways*, 19

<sup>211</sup> Hirsh, *The Forgotten Ways*, 20

<sup>212</sup> Hirsh, *The Forgotten Ways*, 18



*live*. (1 Cor. 8:6). A God who in the very moment of redeeming us claims us as his own through Jesus our Savior."<sup>213</sup>

Another key component is the concept of making disciples and multiplication and comments how C. S. Lewis rightly understood that the purpose of the church was to draw people to Christ and make them like Christ. He said that the church exists for no other purpose. "If the Church is not doing this, then all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible, are a waste of time."<sup>214</sup>

Hirsch also look at the impetus and patterning of Jesus movements over space and time, something he calls the missional- incarnational impulse. Based in his theory Hirsch creates the APEST assessment. Ephesians 4:7, 11–12 assigns the APEPT ministries to the entire church, not just to leadership ("to each one of us grace has been given," v. 7; "It was he who gave some to be . . .," v. 11). All are therefore to be found somewhere in APEPT (apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, teaching/didactic).

The APEST assessment is a profiling instrument designed to assist you in finding your ministry style in relation to the philosophy of the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4 (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, Teachers). It has emerged from over 10 years of practical application of this model in various ministry contexts.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Hirsh, *The Forgotten Ways*, 83

<sup>214</sup> Hirsh, *The Forgotten Ways*, 102

<sup>215</sup> MEDIA. What Is APEST? Accessed December 21, 2020.  
<https://www.theforgottenways.org/what-is-apest.aspx>.

## Critic Evaluation

Hirsch teaches that APEST is part of the DNA of all God's people—in the very fabric of what it means to be “church.” In other words, it is latent, which he connects the Pauline teaching and is as such an extension of the New Testament teaching of the priesthood and ministry of all God's people. So much for the generic ministry embodied in Paul's ecclesiology. What of leadership?

In my particular case, APEST has been very important to me. I am classified as a prophetic leader, and the assessment process has blessed me. Leadership in the light of APEST can be conceived as a calling within a calling. Not all ministers are leaders—that much is obvious. As such, leadership embodies a particular APEST ministry given to the believer but extends and reorients it to fit the distinct calling and leadership tasks.

I conclude that this is an excellent volume, eminently inspiring and practical, with concrete and well-documented steps. This book has deepened my thinking on the need to foster a multiplication culture, as the only biblical answer to exponential growth to which the Kingdom of God is called. According to the assessment, my numbers are apostolic 42, prophetic 40, teaching 27, evangelistic 9, and shepherding 6.

Also, they classified me as an AP (apostle - prophet). The Apostle Prophet is a person who seeks to extend the extraordinary impact of the organization innovatively. Imbued with a sense of passion and commitment, the mature AP will understand the strategy and vision and call others to align with their confident sense of purpose. The

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AP's sense of clarity of system, design, and vision (A) will be supplemented by a keen sense of urgency (P). Therefore, it will sound like a clarion call to action and responsibility to those around them. (See appendix) I must say that going through this assessment has changed my life.)

I recommend this book to church leaders, but in a very special way to apostolic planters who are committed to the multiplication of churches. I also recommend this book to pastors who want to revitalize their churches so that once they are healthy, they can also multiply. I reiterate that this is an excellent book and that the author fully fulfills its purpose by delivering a fresh resource with simple and practical steps that inspire and provides a blueprint to emulate the early church.

## Second Competency Development

**II) ADMINISTRATION:** This project has much of administration. A good administrator must be on top of the management process, which entails planning, organization, direction, control, and evaluation. These churches need to be planted, but they will need a strategy to survive, be relevant, and multiply.

**Goal:** Improve practical skills as a church administrator in the context of the SDA dynamic.

**Strategy I:** To be better prepared for strategy No. 2, I studied the following administrative resources of the SDA church:

- The Constitution of the General Conference of SDA.
- The Official Statement and Guidelines of the SDA Church.
- The General Conference Working Policy, totaling more than 800 pages, and I also took parliamentary training at RulesOnline.com.

**Strategy II:** I went through six sections coaching with Dr. Dionisio Olivo, senior administrator of the Atlantic Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. In the session, we went through the following topics: church administration, SDA policies and ethics, organizational leadership, strategies development, personnel management, and parliamentary procedures. We had over six hours of coaching sessions divided into three encounters of about 2 hours each.

**Evaluation:** Dr. Olivo granted a letter acknowledging the completion of the coaching process. I also provided a four-page report of my readings and my mentorship experience. (Please, see appendix E)

## **Summary of the Administrative Resources of the SDA**

The first and most fundamental document of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an institution, after the Bible, is the General Conference Constitution, revised every five years. The current was revisited at the 60th Session held in San Antonio, Texas, United States of America, from July 2 to July 11, 2015.

The document comprises fourteen articles that rule the name, purpose, divisions, membership, sessions, elections, committee, appointments, duties, corporations, bylaws, dissolutions, and amendments to the same document and the bylaws.

According to this important document, the purpose of the General Conference is to teach all nations the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and God's commandments. "It conducts much of its work through its divisions, which in turn are comprised of unions in specific areas of the world. Each division of the General Conference is authorized to carry out responsibilities in the territory assigned to it. It shall act in full harmony with the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, the General Conference Working Policy, and actions of the Executive Committee."<sup>216</sup>

The Constitution also refers to the bylaws. The delegates present and voting may enact, amend, or repeal them by a two-thirds majority provided it is not inconsistent with the Constitution.

In the bylaws, we find that the duly organized divisions are: East-Central Africa Division, Euro-Asia Division, Inter-American Division, Inter-European Division, North

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<sup>216</sup> "Resources." Secretariat. Last modified December 7, 2020. Accessed December 27, 2020. <https://secretariat.adventist.org/resources/>.

American Division, Northern Asia-Pacific Division, South American Division, South Pacific Division, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Southern Asia Division, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Trans-European Division, and West-Central Africa Division.

The bylaws also define the different session committees, which are:

1. Church Manual Committee
2. Constitution and Bylaws Committee
3. Nominating Committee
4. Steering Committee

Among the many other regulations found in the bylaws are the job descriptions and duties of many offices that lead the General Conference: the vice-presidents and division vice-presidents, the undersecretary and associate's secretaries, the under treasurer and associate treasurers, the departmental directors, auditing services, and more.

The General Conference also operates under the Working Policy regulations. "The operation of a well-defined working policy in harmony with the organization has been one strong factor in binding and cementing the personnel of the body of Seventh-day Adventists together as one in purpose in Christ. "<sup>217</sup>

The General Conference Working Policy holds the procedures approved by the General Conference Executive Committee's Annual Councils. Therefore, it is the official

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<sup>217</sup> H.W. Cottrell, "The Growth of Denominational Organizations," Review and Herald, March 24, 1931, pg. 1

voice of the Church in matters relating to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination word-wide.

According to Irwin H. Evans: An efficient organization needs to have uniform regulations for all its parts.<sup>218</sup> Necessary actions were scattered all through our minutes. The idea of an active policy was to collect these actions, state them briefly and concisely, and have them in a little pocket pamphlet so that we can turn to it and consult it. That original tiny document of 1926 has evolved to about 800 pages today.<sup>219</sup>

I must say that the SDA also has a Church Manual, but its study goes beyond this summary's purpose. It deals with the relationships of the churches in connection to the Conferences. The policy deals with organizations other than the local churches.

Among the Working Policy, we will find the 28 Fundamental Believes of the SDA, follow by the Constitution and bylaws already mentioned, fallow by the sections.

Sections of the working policy are:

- Section A: Mission, vision, and values
- Section B: Organization and administration, foundation, and structure
- Section C: Division territories, council, policies and Unions
- Section D: Model governance documents
- Section E: Denominational employees, credential and licenses
- Section F: Departments

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<sup>218</sup> Irwin H. Evans: "Important Resolutions for the Churches," The Church Officers' Gazette, March 1917, pg. 2.

<sup>219</sup> Myron Iseminger, Undersecretary 2017 Annual Council



- Sections G-K: Agencies, corporations, and services
- Section M: International services policies
- Section N-Q: International service employees, now ISE Working Policy.
- Section R: Adventist Volunteer Service
- Section S: General Financial Policies
- Section SA: Auditing Policies
- Section T: Division Financial Policies
- Section U: Institutional Financial Policies
- Section V: The Tithe and Offerings
- Section W: World Mission Funds
- Section X: Ingathering
- Section Y: Remuneration
- Section Z: Retirement

During the process, I found it necessary to read the constitution and policies of the GNYC, which, although copied from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in general, have particular aspects of the local sphere. I was also enriched with two YouTube videos. One about how rules of order were applied in the 2019 Annual Council of the SDA and a video from Roberts' Rules of Order QuickStart. The mentoring / coaching sections with the pastor and Dr. Olivo were informative and formative, both theoretical and practical. The topics of the meetings have already been outlined.

### Third Competency Development

- III) **SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT:** This project is technology-based. The idea is to plant a movement that is not dependent on buildings and can reach out to people through social media. It will need trained individuals. Being honest, this is one of the most relevant competencies for every professional that wants to succeed, especially after COVID 19.

**Goal:** Acquire new management skills in social media platforms, streaming video-telephony, and online chat services currently used.

**Strategy I:** I was trained and mentor for about six months by pastor Tony Sandoval, an SDA pastor, and social media adept. Particular emphasis was given on how to create relevant content according to the needs and age groups.

**Strategy II:** I expanded my reach on social media by opening a YouTube channel and transforming my Facebook profile into a Facebook page. It has so far, 5021 followers.<sup>220</sup>

I open a subscription with StreamYard, a live streaming studio in your browser that allows you: Interview guests, share your screen, and much more. Stream directly to Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and other platforms. I pay 25 dollars monthly, but it is a blessing since I can live stream directly to my

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<sup>220</sup> See <https://www.facebook.com/Manuel-Rosario-104719188093390>

Facebook page. I did a whole series of eight topics about the ten commandments that reached thousands of views.

I also took three training pieces in Zoom with some experts, including pastor Reynold Rodríguez, the New York Conference's Communication Director. I was mentor, too, on how to do zoom webinars under the supervision of our GNYC IT services, Kelvin Rivas.

I prepared a small studio at home from where I broadcast, preach, and teach. It has been a little expensive to get it done, but it is a blessing (pictures below). Now, I am learning more about Multi-Media. I do not believe there will be a time where I will be done with this competency, but we are moving forward.

**Evaluation:** I got a letter signed by my mentor certifying the coaching process. (Please, see appendix F).





## APPENDICES

## **Appendix A: Approved Proposal**

### **PORTABLE TECHNOLOGY-BASED MICRO CHURCHES: A MULTIPLICATION MODEL FOR THE GREATER NEW YORK CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS.**

By

MANUEL ANTONIO ROSARIO SÁNCHEZ

### **A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL**

New York Theological Seminary

June 30, 2020

### **Challenge Statement**

I am the Personal Ministries Director and Chairman of the Evangelism Committee of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Like most Christian denominations, we lost the culture of planting new churches, which was always part of our ethos. Statistics show that 96% of churches in America do not multiply, mostly because they lack vision and leadership. This demonstration project will design a portable technology-based church planting multiplication model that trains the leaders to grow and reproduce their churches.

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## INTRODUCTION

*"So, the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers" Acts 16:5*

The correlation between the great commission and church planting is stunning. Luke reminds us that the new disciples were integrated into communities called churches. It is written: "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day... And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:41,47).

It is also interesting that the Book of Acts is permeated with a culture of multiplication. Disciples, leaders, finances, and churches multiplied. Two times the beloved physician specifically declares that the churches (ἐκκλησία) grew and multiplied. (Acts 9:31, 16:5). These dynamic micro churches, meeting in houses (Romans 16:3,5) and guided by the Holy Spirit, kept reproducing without temples or complicated structures.

Clifton Clint, in his book *Church Planting Thresholds*, points out that churches make disciples and disciples make churches and that the most critical and necessary resource is a truly willing leader.<sup>221</sup>

He asserts that the American churches have been so busy doing the ministry that they have neglected the mission. Then he quotes: "Our greatest potential for the growth of the Kingdom is found in the local churches, whose elders and members

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<sup>221</sup> Clifton Clint, *Church Planting Thresholds: A Gospel-Centered Guide* (Middletown, DE: New City Network, 2016) xvii.



dedicate themselves to train and send members to plant new churches in the communities that need them."<sup>222</sup>

I think he is right! Ellen G. White once stated: "Upon all who believe, God has placed the burden of raising churches"<sup>223</sup>

As Thom S. Rainer rightly refers, the blessing is that during the Covid 19 pandemic, many church members and leaders discovered that the church was still the church even without the facilities.<sup>224</sup> It proves once again that church planting is more than starting new church services. It is about mission; it is about reaching people where they are, and people are on social media platforms. "Indeed, the digital world opened up possibilities that many congregations had never considered, much less tried."<sup>225</sup>

Yes, we must plant all kinds of churches, including online churches, as long as they keep faithful to the Biblical truth. It is probably the time to adapt to the old proverb<sup>226</sup> and declare: "If the people do not come to the Church, the Church will go to the People."

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<sup>222</sup> Clint, *Church Planting Thresholds*, xix.

<sup>223</sup> Ellen G. White, "*Ministry to the Cities*" (Doral, Florida: IADPA, 2012) 130.

<sup>224</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *The Post-Quarantine Church: Six Urgent Challenges + Opportunities That Will Determine the Future of Your Congregation*. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2020). 17

<sup>225</sup> Rainer, *The Post-Quarantine Church*, 17.

<sup>226</sup> "If the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the hill." Francis Bacon.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING

### **Reflection upon the Ministry**

The Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GNYC) was organized in 1902 to proclaim the good news of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>227</sup>

The GNYC is committed to providing its members with a high-quality ministry, by assuming the inalienable commitment to prepare a people for the soon second coming of Christ. Adventists believe in the importance of discipleship as a constant of personal growth. The Adventist legacy is vast as they are known worldwide for their family care, educational and health systems, and vigorous youth movement, among other aspects of great relevance.

The GNYC has a very active Family Ministry led by experts in the area of family life, which has certified with Andrews University, the flagship educational Institution of the SDA church, more than 100 family couches in the last four years. It also operates 8 Schools and one Academy in which hundreds of students Adventists and non-Adventists are educated.

Like all other Conferences, the GNYC has a vibrant Youth Ministry that leads thousands of children and youth organized as Adventurers, Pathfinders, and Master Guides. Its Community Service (CS) runs the Van Ministry, which provides education on

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<sup>227</sup> Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Working Policy Handbook, p.2.

healthy food, relaxation massages, and much more. The Conference also operates more than 33 food pantries, which serve everybody without interruptions and exceptions. The CS runs the Shower of Blessings as well; a Van, highly equipped to provide free baths to homeless people in the city.

### **Reflection upon the Mission**

Adventists are mission-driven, which makes all their Ministries in full harmony with their vision. Their task is the Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20.

The mission statement of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists declares: "Making disciples by touching hearts and changing lives with the everlasting gospel." <sup>228</sup>

Also, essential in their vision of mission is Revelation 14: 6-12, which features three angels flying in heaven with the everlasting gospel to be preached worldwide. Adventists see themselves as these angels. It gives their mission a sense of worldwide imperative.

As part of their missionary arsenal, Adventists promote small groups / Sabbath School discipleship units, community service, evangelistic programs, church planting, printing press, radio, television, social media, and much more. The GNYC has a powerful evangelistic literature program, with dozens of canvassers distributing them from house to house. It also has an Adventist Book Center (ABC) in its headquarters in Manhasset, Long Island.

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<sup>228</sup> Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Strategic Planning 2019-2022, Greater New York, p. 6.

It is essential to say that the SDA church operates more than 60 printing houses all over the world. With great wisdom, Ellen G. White also said:

Small tracts on the different points of Bible truth applicable to the present time should be printed in different languages and scattered where there is any probability that they would be read. God has placed at the command of His people advantages in the press, which, combined with other agencies, will be successful in extending the knowledge of the truth. Tracts, papers, and books, as the case demands, should be circulated in all the cities and villages in the land. Here is missionary work for all to engage in.<sup>229</sup>

In 2014 the GNYC rekindled a powerful church planting movement. The vision driving that movement is: "Every disciple, making a disciple and every church planting a church." Since then, over fifty 50 new churches have been planted. The idea now is to consolidate and expand that vision in a more aggressive portable technology-based model.

### **Reflection upon the Spirituality**

Adventists take the issue of spirituality very seriously. In 1853, only a few years after the first group of Sabbath-keeping Adventists was formed in Washington, New Hampshire, James White organized the first regular Sabbath School in Rochester, New York. Since then, the Sabbath School has established itself as the main promoter of spirituality and the leading non-formal educational system of the SDA church.<sup>230</sup>

From its inception, Sabbath School has focused on four emphases that are still prominent to this day: fellowship development, community outreach, Bible study, and

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<sup>229</sup> Ellen Gould White, "Counsels on Health and Instruction to Medical Missionary Workers" (Mountain View: CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1923), 466.2.

<sup>230</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Church Sabbath School" SDA, Accessed on June 14, 2020, <https://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/sabbathschool>.

foreign mission. A stable balance of these elements characterizes the most vital Sabbath Schools around the world. Through the Sabbath School, the church provides worldwide quarterly studies of the Bible.

The main pillars that support Adventist spirituality are the study of the Bible, prayer, the worship services, and the reading of Ellen G. White's books, which they consider a Lord's prophet. Adventists also support all other spiritual disciplines with a scriptural foundation such as fasting and the return of tithe and offerings. They also believe a healthy devotional life is directly proportional to church growth.

According to Christian Schwartz, Director of Natural Church Development (NCD), who did worldwide research on the essential characteristics of growing churches, passionate spirituality is one of the eight basics qualities of growing churches.

Christian Schwarz has studied 70000 congregations worldwide and identified eight essential elements in healthy churches. He emphasizes that God's church will grow naturally if it is functioning healthily. The job of the church staff is to be aware of the crucial areas, which, if not performing well, will tend to block healthy church development.<sup>231</sup>

In North America, the SDA church has the legal right to apply the NCD surveys and has done so in hundreds of its churches. According to Russel Burrill and Tom L. Evans, in their books *Creating Healthy Adventist Churches through Natural Church Development*, in the churches using the NCD Survey, passionate spirituality appears near

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<sup>231</sup> Christian Schwartz "Natural Church Development" NCD, Accessed June 14, 2020, <http://www.ncd-international.org/public/?jsessionid=8D496DCFE3045FB21A9A061499A6665B>.

the top in the Adventist experience. It is our second highest characteristic, averaging 54.3. (the ideal factor is 65).

Two questions from this category score in the top 10 out of the entire survey: "I enjoy reading the Bible on my own (average of 66%), and the Bible is a powerful guide for me in the decision of everyday life (average of 62). This exceptional result indicates that Adventists are people of the Book."<sup>232</sup>

### **Reflection upon the Identity**

The Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and all of its constituent are part of the worldwide organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, organized in the USA on May 21, 1863. Among SDA founders are Joseph Bates, James White, Ellen G. White, and John N. Andrews.

As of December 31, 2018, the Summary of Statistics reported 88,718 Churches, 72,843 Companies, and 21,414,779 members worldwide. The SDA church is organized in 13 Divisions around the world, divided into Unions, which are, in turn, subdivided into local Conferences.

The Greater New York Conference, at the same time, is part of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists and the Atlantic Union of Seventh-day Adventists. The Atlantic Union is the Headquarter for the Seventh-day Adventist Church serving the Northeast United States and the Islands of Bermuda.

The Greater New York Conference of SDA church serves over 31 thousand members that worship in more than 25 languages in over 200 churches, companies, and

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<sup>232</sup> Russell Burrill and Tom L. Evans, *Creating Healthy Adventist Churches through Natural Church Development* (Berrien Spring, Michigan: College Press, 2014), 43,44.

mission groups. The congregations are organized in five ministries: Hispanic, English, Multiethnic, Franco-Haitian, and Korean. Since its organization on January 1, 1902, the GNYC has covered the following geographical areas: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk counties), Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island and Upstate (Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester counties.)

### **Reflection upon the Programs**

According to the working policy, "the objective of all the programs and activities of Conference departments is to spread the gospel of Jesus and to hasten the day of his coming." <sup>233</sup>

To serve better the constituents, the GNYC is organized as follows: An executive committee, authorized by the quadrennial sessions, that has full authority to act on behalf of the Institution. And three Administrative Officers: President, Executive Secretary, and Treasurer, which give administrative leadership and five Ethnic Ministries Coordinators.

The following Departmental Directors provide leadership to the various following programs: Personal Ministries, Sabbath School, Disability Ministries, Prison Ministries, Family Ministries, Youth Ministries, Children Ministries, Women Ministries, Men Ministries, Prayer Ministries, Publishing Ministries, Stewardship, Education, Communication, Community Services, Religious Liberty and Trust Services.

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<sup>233</sup> Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Working Policy Handbook, p.3.

The Office is open Monday to Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and in wintertime from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The leading worship service is Saturdays. Members and visitors gather to review the quarterly Sabbath School Lessons that the church provides in a print version and online. Then follows divine worship. Adventists usually eat lunch at the temple and use the afternoon for community service, youth counseling, family life, Christians' finances.

### **Reflection upon the Ethos**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church voices its official teachings in a formal statement known as the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. In many of these, the SDA step on common ground with other Christian denominations. SDA believes in salvation by faith in Jesus only. They also believe in the trinity and many other biblical doctrines.

There are few teachings held exclusively by Seventh-day Adventists. Some of their views that differ from most Christian churches include the perpetuity of the seventh-day Sabbath, the unconsciousness of man in death, conditional immortality, an atoning ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and an "investigative judgment" that commenced in 1844. Furthermore, a traditionally historicist approach to prophecy has led Adventists to develop a unique system of eschatological beliefs that incorporates a commandment-keeping "remnant", a universal end-time crisis revolving around the law of God, and the visible return of Jesus Christ before a millennial reign of believers in heaven.<sup>234</sup>

Regarding the SDA values. The following value statement was approved and voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee at the Annual Council in Silver Spring, Maryland, on October 10, 2004:

Seventh-day Adventist values are rooted in the revelation of God provided through the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ. Our sense of identity and calling grows from an understanding of Bible prophecies, especially those concerning the

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<sup>234</sup> Wikipedia, Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Accessed on June 16, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh-day\\_Adventist\\_theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh-day_Adventist_theology).



time immediately preceding the return of Jesus. Consequently, all of life becomes a growing experience and demonstration of involvement with God and His kingdom. Our sense of mission is driven by the realization that every person, regardless of circumstances, is of infinite value to God and thus deserving of respect and dignity. Through God's grace, every person is gifted for and needed in the diverse activities of the church family. Our respect for diversity, individuality, and freedom is balanced by regard for the community. We are one—a worldwide family of faith engaged in representing the reign of God in our world through ethical conduct, mutual care, and loving service. Our faithfulness to God involves a commitment to and support of His body, the church.<sup>235</sup>

### **Reflection upon the Resources and Capacities**

The GNYC is a trustworthy Christian Institution whose maximum strength is its members' high Christian vocation and a great capacity for service. Adventists have a strong belief that God is the sole owner of everything and see themselves as stewards.

SDA fundamental belief No. 20 declares:

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellowmen, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness.<sup>236</sup>

The GNYC has a not-for-profit legal corporation, The Greater New York Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists, which holds title to all real state and vehicles belonging to the Conference. "The business of the Corporation is conducted by its Board of Trustees.

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<sup>235</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Values" (SDA) October 10, 2004, Accessed on June 16, 2020, <https://www.adventist.org/articles/values/>.

<sup>236</sup> We Believe: *A Brief Explanation of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church*. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2007).

The Corporation also owns the building where the GNYC is located at seven Shelter Rock Road Manhasset, NY, 11030. It has edifices through NY State, including Camp Berkshire, which is primarily a summer facility that seats 1,600 people.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

#### Challenge Statement

I am the Personal Ministries Director and Chairman of the Evangelism Committee of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Like most Christian denominations, we lost the culture of planting new churches, which was always part of our ethos. Statistics show that 96% of churches in America do not multiply, mostly because they lack vision and leadership. This demonstration project will design a portable technology-based church planting multiplication model that trains the leaders to grow and reproduce their churches.

The Greater New York Conference of SDA was established on January 1, 1902, to proclaim the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The Institution was organized in response to Ellen White's prophetic advice, and it is called to be a Conference that advances like a burning lamp. In this regard, she wrote:

"While in New York in the winter of 1901, I received light in regard to the work in that great city. Night after night, the course that our brethren should pursue passed before me. In Greater New York, the message is to go forth as a lamp that burneth... New York is ready to be worked. In that great city, the message of truth will be given with the power of God.<sup>237</sup>

She also said that Greater New York should be a symbol of the work the Lord desires to see done in the world. I have to say that the Greater New Conference for more

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<sup>237</sup> Ellen G. White, *Ministry to the Cities* (México: IADPA, 2012), 143. Also in Testimonies for The Church 7:54, 55 (1902).

than 118 years has been that lamp and symbol. However, an assessment conducted in 2014 revealed that the Conference had been losing one of its main missionary components: the vision of multiplication.

At that time, out of the five Ethnic Ministries that structure the Conference, three were stopped entirely in the vision of planting new churches, and only two were moving slowly. The Korean Ministry, for example, had produced its last church in 1989. Also, both the English and the Franco-Haitian Ministries had planted their previous churches more than ten years ago. Only the Multiethnic and the Spanish Ministries were barely growing.

It is honest to say that this missionary drop has been systematic and general. Dr. Russel Burrill, emeritus professor of Church Growth and Evangelism at Andrews University and former Director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute, comments:

In the 1870s, a new church was planted each year for every two ordained ministers. This was sustained for all ten years of the decade. In the 1880s, the rate was for every five or six ordained ministers, and in the 1890s, one new church was established every year for every four ordained ministers. Today in the first half of the 1990s, more than one hundred and twenty pastors are required to raise one church each year in North America. If modern Adventist pastors were to plant churches at the same rate as their forefathers, North America today would be planting 1,882 churches a year by the 1870s rate...; or 768 a year by the rate of the 1890s, instead of in the first half of the 1990s, North American Adventists had only 25 to 30 new starts.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Russell Burrill, *Rekindling a Lost Passion*, (Fallbrook, California: Hart Research Center, 1999), 53.

It is clear then that more than a local problem, it is a universal problem. Actually, in the midst ninetens, the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists was losing churches instead of planting churches. It is also correct to say that the problem transcends Adventism. It is a problem of the Christian church in the United States and beyond.

I have to be honest; significant efforts have been made during the last few years to change the picture. EXPONENTIAL, the leading event for church planters in North America, has done an invaluable job in awareness, inspiration, and training. However, a phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors conducted by LifeWay Research Jan. 14 – 30, 2019, with a sample of 95% confidence and a sampling error of 3.2 percent, affirms that the problem is still far to be resolved. Please pay careful attention to the facts:

LifeWay Research found that 6 in 10 Protestant churches are plateaued or declining in attendance. In 2018, few churches added new multi-site campuses (3 percent) or were involved in some form of planting (32 percent). Sixty-eight percent say they had no involvement in church planting. Around 1 in 10 (12 percent) say they were directly or substantially involved in opening a new church, including 7 percent who were a primary financial sponsor or providing ongoing support to a church plant.<sup>239</sup>

Please note that out of the 12 percent directly involved in opening a new church in 2018, 7% were primarily financial sponsors. As incredible as sponsoring is. The fact is that only 5 percent were on the front-line. Planting! In the North American Division of SDA (NAD), after the launching of the SEEDs program in 1996 and the Plant1000 initiative in 2016, the results are lovely but still tiny.

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<sup>239</sup> Aaron Earls, “Small, Struggling Congregations Fill U.S. Church Landscape” LifeWay Research, March 6, 2019, Accessed June 15, 2020, <https://lifewayresearch.com/2019/03/06/small-struggling-congregations-fill-u-s-church-landscape/>.

As of December 2019, the Secretary's Statistical Report of the NAD recounted 5,621 churches and 880 companies for a total of 6,501; previously, as of December 2015, they had already informed 5,483 churches and 845 companies for a total of 6,328. Comparing 2015 with 2019, the NAD evidence a net growth of 173 churches and companies, corroborating an official increase of 2.66% in the quinquennium. It does not include the mission groups, which add around 700 hundred more congregations. In that case, the growth would be about 13%. It implies a multiplication rate of 2.7 per year. We could accurately say that less than 3% of the NAD churches are multiplying.

In the Greater New York Conference, we are doing better, to God be the glory! According to Secretariat, as of December 2015, we had 154 churches and 18 companies totaling 172; however, as of December 2019, they reported 160 churches and 33 companies totaling 193. It is 21 more, showing an increase of 12.20% in five years ( $21 \times 100 / 172$ ). It does not include the mission groups, which add another 30, for a total multiplication rate of 29.65% ( $52 \times 100 / 172$ ) for the quinquennial and 6% per year.

Our challenge now as Greater New York Conference, is first, out of these church plants, consolidate the desired culture of multiplication, turning the pilot plant into a real, sustainable, cost-effective, easy to follow model and second, provide the facts to motivate the 70% of our churches still not involved in planting.

## CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### **Question ONE**

*Biblical – Theological:* How does the Great Commission relate to church planting?

The Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20 is the marching order of the Christian church; however, for many believers, it is still unclear what Jesus meant by going and making disciples. This thesis defends that it merely means to go and multiply. The early church obeyed this mandate by preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins, baptizing those who repented and adding them to communities of believers called churches, which in turn kept multiplying.

### **Question TWO**

*Biblical – Sociological:* Are the biblical concepts of church and mission malleable enough to include the online worship gathering?

A mission implies a specific task with which a person or a group is charged. Jesus said: "...As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (John 20:21), so the mission is sending at the end of the day. The task of the missionary is to preach the gospel to make disciples. The challenge is that while the gospel is everlasting, the world is ever-changing, so new methods must be continuously employed. This dissertation promotes the idea that the church's mission far from being rigid is plastic enough to find people where they are.

Church, more than institutions, buildings, or programs, is the congregation of believers. Jesus was clear: “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20) The challenge is that this congregational model was always physical; however, after COVID 19, it abruptly became virtual. This dissertation also defends the idea that biblically and historically, the concept of church is malleable enough to admit the online gathering.

### **Question THREE**

*Sociological:* How do living generations embrace spirituality and church attendance?

Sociologists of religions explain that there has been a systematic change in how different generations embrace spirituality, especially in church attendance, festivals, and religious traditions. In this regard, the Pew Research declares: According to recent surveys Generation Z is the least religious generation. About one third have no religion—about the same proportion as Millennials—compared with 23 percent, 17 percent, and 11 percent among Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation.<sup>240</sup>

According to research by the Barna Group, Gen Z's ties to religion seem weaker than Millennials: They are more likely to identify as atheist or agnostic (21 percent vs. 15 percent), and most think church attendance is unimportant. "For Gen Z, "atheist" is no longer a dirty word: The percentage of teens who identify as such is double that of the general population (13% vs. 6% of all adults). The proportion that identifies as Christian

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<sup>240</sup> Michael Lipka, “Millennials increasingly are driving the growth of nones” Pew Research Center, May 12, 2015, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/12/millennials-increasingly-are-driving-growth-of-nones/>.



likewise drops from generation to generation. Three out of four Boomers are Protestant or Catholic Christians (75%), while just three in five 13- to 18-year-olds say they are some Christian (59%).”<sup>241</sup>

#### **Question FOUR**

*Historical:* What has been the historical impact of the church planting methodology on the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church?

The SDA church began as a church planting movement, which explains its worldwide expansion in less than one hundred years. SDAs identify themselves with the three angels of Revelation 14: 6-13, which flies in the mid of heaven preaching the eternal gospel.

This compelling belief pushed the Adventist missionaries to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Sadly, over the last few decades, this intentional approach to planting churches has been dying and needs to be rekindled. This proposal endorses the assertion raised in 1990 by C. Peter Wagner in his book *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*: "The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches."<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Barna, "Atheism Doubles Among Generation Z" Barna Group, January 24, 2018, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.barna.com/research/atheism-doubles-among-generation-z/>.

<sup>242</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Third Edition* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2004), 24.

## CHAPTER 4

### PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION

#### **Goals and Strategies**

**Goal 1:** Raise awareness on the urgency to rekindle the culture of planting new churches as a critical evangelistic method to reach new people for God's kingdom.

**Strategy 1:** Develop with a master group the criteria to implement the project, starting with the awareness campaign. (September 2020)

**Strategy 2:** Publish a digital booklet and design a whiteboard video campaign to motivate the vision and promote the benefits of a micro-church multiplication system to be distributed among the board members of the new congregations planted between 2015-2020. (October 2020)

**Strategy 3:** Produce a **quantitative-qualitative** study targeting the spiritual, missional, and financial growth of the new churches planted in the GNYC between 2015 – 2020 to be distributed among their board members. (October 2020)

**Evaluation of Goal 1:** Design a survey to measure the attitude toward church planting of the board members of the new congregations planted between 2015-2020. The study will also measure the impact of the favorability in this regard. At least 80% of the participants should also affirm that they received new relevant knowledge.

**Goal 2:** Appoint a master group of 10-12 people, including pastors and lay church planters, to help me design, implement, and evaluate the project. The group should include at least one computer engineer as a technological advisor.

**Strategy 1:** Develop a selection standard for the master group members. It should provide a specific skill set to implement the project. (October 2020)

**Strategy 2:** Select the master group members. Dedicate five one-hour zoom sections to design a master plan to implement the project, which includes vision, mission, values, goals, strategies, budgets, timeline, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to short-term and long-term evaluation. The plan must be based on these three pillars: why plant new churches, how to plant new churches, and what kind of churches we should grow. (November 2020)

**Strategy 3:** Expose the master group members to a weekend training with renowned SDA church planters' practitioners and EXPONENTIAL, the leading event for church planters in North America or the North American Division of SDA church planters boot camp, to help consolidate their vision. (November 2020)

**Evaluation of Goal 2:** The minutes verifying that the team has been selected and the tasks accomplished. Also, at least 80% of the TEAM should be present at the zoom sections, and the weekend training and not less than 75% should assist to Exponential, or the NAD church planters boot camp.

**Goal 3:** Design a portable technology-based church planting multiplication model that facilitates a cost-effective reproduction process to be piloted across the new churches of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists planted between 2015-2020.

**Strategy 1:** Appoint an ad hoc committee with pastors, experts, practitioners, and lay leaders that support the church planting movement to validate the new churches' values, structure, average size, financial system, support system, and technological spectrum designed by the master group. The meeting will be via Zoom and will last about 3 hours. (November 2020)

**Strategy 2:** Launch the GNYC online Church Planting Institute to train, for three months, in the vision of multiplication at least 25 church planting teams selected out of the new churches planted between 2015-2020. The Institute will meet twice a month for 2 hours to teach the new system. (November 2020)

**Strategy 3:** Design a Facebook page to provide resources and assist in implementing the project. (December 2020)

**Strategy 4:** Organize a church planting festival entirely dedicated to church multiplication. At least 300 leaders are expected to assist. It could be face-to-face or virtual according to the new-normal post-COVID 19. (February 2021)

**Evaluation:** That a minimum of 85% of the New Church Planting Institute graduates understands the three fundamental pillars of the master

plan: why plant churches, how to plant churches, and what type of churches to plant. At least 70% of the teams should commit to growing a new church plant within two years from the training's conclusion.

## **CHAPTER 5 EVALUATION PROCESS**

We cannot talk about evaluation until we can operationalize our goals. At the same time, operationalization is the process by which we explain how a goal will be measured. It usually is done by answering what, why, how, when, where, and how much?

It is also crucial to specify the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are the ways to evaluate whether the CSFs have been achieved.

In this project, the main CSF is the overall commitment to plant and the percentage of new churches to be grown within two years from the conclusion of the training. The goal is that a minimum of 85% of the graduates of the New Church Planting Institute understands the three fundamental pillars of the master plan: why plant churches, how to plant churches, and what type of churches to plant (KPI 1) and that a least 70% of the team will commit to planting. (KPI 2). A survey for this purpose will be designed.

A second CSF has to do with the attitude toward church planting of the board members of the new congregations planted between 2015-2020. The survey will also measure new knowledge as a result of the whiteboard video campaign and the quantitative study targeting the spiritual, missional, and financial growth of the congregations planted in the GNYC between 2015 – 2020. At least 80% should also affirm that they received new relevant knowledge. (KPI 3)

The third CSF makes sure that training programs are completed by the participants. At least 80% of the TEAM should be present at the zoom sections, and the weekend training and not less than 75% should assist to Exponential, or the NAD church

planters boot camp. (KPI 4)

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES**

#### **The Process**

The Site Team did a great job assisting me in this assessment. The members involved were: Dr. Steve Cassimy, Dr. Samuel Peguero Colón, Pr. Herode Thomas, and Pr. Everette Samuel. Special gratitude to Dr. Nicardo Delahaye, who, after the COVID 19 crisis, acted as an Ad hoc Site Team member, coaching the selection process.

On May 8, 2020, we started the evaluation. A second meeting was held on May 28, 2020, and the final in June 2020. Our joint agreement is as follow:

#### **The Assessments**

As Theologian pastor Rosario is solid. He holds a Bachelor of Theology and an MDiv. Also, as an ordained pastor, he has been teaching the Bible truths since 1998.

As Preacher and Interpreter of Sacred Texts, the same previous arguments are given. Pastor Rosario has been preaching since age 14. Also, as part of his MDiv, he had to take one year of Greek and Hebrew languages.

As worship leader pastor Rosario is average, but the team understands there are other priorities as it relates to his gifts and vision of life.

As a religious leader, pastor Rosario is recognized as a strong spiritual leader. The same thing could be said of his qualities as a religious and spiritual educator and spiritual leader.



As a counselor and pastor, Rosario is a gifted servant of God. Having been a minister for 22 years, he has gone through many pieces of trainings to strengthen these abilities.

As a professional, Rosario is accomplished, having different study careers in three other countries.

As an evangelist, Rosario is recognized as a gifted one. He has also led the Evangelism Department of the Greater NY Conference for the last six years.

As financial management, pastor Rosario is well-known as the lead radio producer of Faith and Finances. He also was a Stewardship Director at a Conference level for almost three years in the Dominican Republic.

### **Competencies Chosen for Development**

**I)      PROPHETIC AGENT:** I am trying to change a tradition of decades. The idea is to bring back our early culture of multiplication, and that is a prophetic task. A prophet is one who foretells the truth more than the future. A prophet provides vision (heb. chazown), meaning revelation, since “where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained” (Proverbs 29:18). A prophet provides leadership. It is written: “By a prophet, the Lord brought Israel up from Egypt, and by a prophet, he was guarded.” (Hosea 12:13). Prophets are committed to change their world and environment.

**Goal:** Grow to the fullest the potential of a prophetic agent, latent in me, in the context of providing a vision that challenges the status quo, while I acquire the spiritual and technical tools to manage the challenges it brings.

**Strategy I:** I will read the book the Forgotten Ways by Allan Hirsch to be better prepared for strategy No. 2

**Strategy II:** I will pay to take the APEST test by Allan Hirsch and go through their assessment process. The APEST assessment is a profiling instrument designed to assist church leaders in finding their ministry style concerning to the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4 (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, Teachers). It has emerged from over ten years of the practical application of this model in various ministry contexts.

**Evaluation:** I will go through the APEST vocational assessment and bring the profile. Also, I will provide a five-page report of the book 'The Forgotten Ways'. It will be done by August 31, 2020, God's willing.

**II) ADMINISTRATION:** This project has much administration. A good administrator must be on top of the management process, which entails planning, organization, direction, control, and evaluation. These churches need to be planted, but they will need a strategy to survive, be relevant, and multiply.

**Goal:** Improve practical skills as a church administrator in the context of the SDA dynamic.

**Strategy I:** To be better prepared for strategy No. 2, I will study the following Administrative Resources of the SDA church: 1) Constitution of the General Conference of SDA, 2) The Official Statement and Guidelines of the SDA Church 3) The General Conference Working Policy, totaling more than 800

pages and will take a parliamentary training at RulesOnline.com. At least 50% of the course will be completed by the time I finish the implementation plan.

**Strategy II:** I will go through four-section coaching with a senior administrator of the Atlantic Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. In the session, we will go through the following topics: church administration, SDA policies, organizational leadership, strategies development, personnel management, and parliamentary procedures.

**Evaluation:** The senior administrator will provide a letter acknowledging the completion of the accompaniment. I will also provide a five-page report of my readings and course. It will be done by October 31, 2020, God's willing.

III) **SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT:** This project is technology-based. The idea is to plant a movement that is not dependent on buildings and can reach out to people through social media. It will need trained individuals. Being honest, this is one of the most relevant competencies for every professional that wants to succeed, especially after COVID 19.

**Goal:** Acquire new management skills in social media platforms, streaming video-telephony, and online chat services, currently used.

**Strategy I:** I will be trained and mentor for two to four months by a social media expert. Particular emphasis will be put on how to create relevant content according to the needs and age groups.

**Strategy II:** I will expand my reach on social media by opening either a YouTube channel or an Instagram account.

**Evaluation:** I will get a certifying letter signed by my mentor. It will be done by January 31, 2021, God's willing.

## TIMELINE

Date	Activity	Description	Responsible
<b>June – July 2020</b>			
<b>Proposal</b>			
June	First draft	Project proposal to Dr. Lundy	Manuel Rosario
July	Second draft	Project proposal to Dr. Lundy	Manuel Rosario
July	Last draft	The final proposal to Dr. Lundy	Manuel Rosario
<b>August –November 2020</b>			
<b>Research questions, the appointment of the master group and strategic meetings</b>			
August –Sept.	Research questions	Academic writing	Manuel Rosario
October 4 – October 31, 2020	Master group appointments and meetings	Presentation of the proposal and brainstorming about criteria, digital booklet, video campaign, and quantitative study	Manuel Rosario
November 15, 2020	To publish the digital booklet, the whiteboard video campaign, and the quantitative study	Distribution of the digital booklet the Whiteboard video and the quantitative research	Manuel Rosario
November - December	Master group training and Exponential.		Manuel Rosario
<b>December 2020 – March 2021</b>			
<b>Creating a Culture of Multiplication</b>			

December	Appoint an ad hoc committee to validate the multiplication model.	The meeting will be via Zoom and will last about 3 hours.	Manuel Rosario and master group
January	Launch the GNYC online Church Planting Institute. It will meet twice a month for 2 hours to teach the new system.	For three months, to train, in the vision of multiplication, at least 25 church planting teams selected out of the new churches planted between 2015-2020.	Manuel Rosario and master group
January 2021	Design a Facebook page	To provide resources and assist in implementing the project.	Manuel Rosario
March 2021	Organize a church planting festival entirely dedicated to church multiplication.	At least 300 leaders are expected to assist and report. It could be face-to-face or virtual according to the new-normal post-COVID 19.	Manuel Rosario and master group
April	Evaluation	According to CSFs and KPIs	Manuel Rosario and master group
May - July	Writing	Final draft	Manuel Rosario

## **BUDGET**

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Research Books and Editing	2,000.00
Zoom Account	600.00
Master Group Meetings	1,000.00
Training / Honorarium	3,000.00
Booklet / Translation	2,000.00
White Board Video	1,000.00
Quantitative Study	2,000.00
Survey	1,000.00
Church Planting Institute	3,000.00
Church Planting Festival	2,000.00
Personal Development	3,000.00
Dinners	1,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,600.00</b>

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## Appendix B: SDA Church in Figures

Summary of Statistics of the SDA Church as of October 30, 2019	
Churches	88,718
Companies	72,843
Church Membership	21,414,779
Baptisms	1,262,998
Former Members Baptized	58,841
Professions of Faith	44,863
Ordained Ministers, Active (Full time and Part time)	20,434
Total Active Employees (Full time, Part time, Casual)	321,410
Countries and Areas of the World as Recognized by the United Nations	235
Countries and Areas of the World in Which Seventh-day Adventist Work is Established	213
Languages Used in Seventh-day Adventist Publications and Oral Work	557
Divisions	13
Union Conferences	63
Union Missions	58
Union of Churches Conferences	11
Union of Churches Missions	5
Local Conferences	405
Local Missions	293
Total Schools	8,807
Tertiary Institutions	118
Worker Training Institutions	34
Secondary Schools	2,549
Primary Schools	6,106
Total Enrollment	1,881,571
Tertiary Institutions	167,739
Worker Training Institutions	7,350
Secondary Schools	576,456
Primary Schools	1,130,026
Food Industries	22
Hospitals and Sanitariums	211
Nursing Homes and Retirement Centers <i>*Incomplete reporting</i>	121
Clinics and Dispensaries	440
Orphanages and Children's Homes <i>*Incomplete reporting</i>	11
Inpatient Visits	over 1.5 M
Outpatient Visits	over 22 Million
Media Centers	16
Publishing Houses and Branches	60
Literature Evangelists, Full time, Interns, Part Time	21,591
Literature Evangelists, Credentialed and Licensed	4,890
Languages Used in Publications	368
Languages Heard in Broadcasts	327
Languages and Dialects Used in Oral Work	525
Countries and Areas of the World Where ADRA is Present	over 118
Total Projects Funded	1,043
Beneficiaries of Projects	16,255,570
Prepared by the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research	
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists	

**Appendix C: Participants Booklet in Spanish**

**El Movimiento de las Micro-Iglesias**  
Plantando el Evangelio en cada esquina y en el Ciberespacio.

Por

Manuel A. Rosario, PhD.

Este documento es un primer borrador, parte de mi proyecto de doctorado en Ministerio que eventualmente se convertirá en un libro, Dios mediante.

**Autor:**

Manuel A. Rosario

**Traducción del texto:**

Enrique González

**Edición:**

Sarat Arias

**Diseño de portada y diagramación:**

Publicado por Kindle Direct Publishing  
Seattle, Washington, United States.

Impreso en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica  
2020

Este libro está dedicado: al misionero por excelencia, Cristo Jesús, quien dejó su trono para plantar Su Iglesia en nuestro planeta, y a todos los misioneros que siguen Su ejemplo en Nueva York y en todo el mundo.

Este libro fue escrito con la intención de capacitar a plantadores de iglesias y con la visión de crear un movimiento de plantación de micro-iglesias que no dependa de edificios físicos para cumplir la misión. Agradezco a la Conferencia del Gran Nueva York y al Seminario Teológico de Nueva York por apoyar mi propuesta y, por supuesto, a Dios, a mi esposa, a mis hijos, a mis padres y a mis hermanos y hermanas.



**Autor:**

Manuel A. Rosario es el afortunado esposo de Jazmín y el padre de Carlos y Carolin. Comenzó su ministerio pastoral en 1998, fue ordenado al sagrado ministerio en el 2004 y ha servido a la Iglesia Adventista del séptimo Día en la República Dominicana y en Nueva York como pastor distrital, productor radial y profesor universitario. Se desempeñó como director de comunicaciones, salud y mayordomía de la Asociación Central Dominicana. En la actualidad es director de la Escuela Sabática y Ministerios Personales / Ministerios de Prisiones / Ministerios para personas con Discapacidades de la Asociación del Gran Nueva York y preside el Comité de Evangelismo y la iniciativa de plantación de iglesias.

El doctor Rosario es graduado en teología y en derecho con el más alto honor en ambas carreras, posee un posgrado en Psicología y tres maestrías en: Metodología de la Investigación Científica y Epistemología (Rep. Dom.), en Estudios Avanzados (España) y en Divinidades (EE.UU.). Además, un PhD en Filosofía (España) con énfasis en Investigación Social y Percepción Pública. Actualmente culmina su segundo doctorado, esta vez en Ministerio en el Seminario Teológico de Nueva York. El inglés es su segunda lengua.

IADPA y GEMA, editoriales de la División Interamericana de los ASD y Create Space, una compañía de Amazon, han publicado sus libros: Mayordomía es salvación; De la iglesia a la calle y The Loving Father, esta última es una Guía de estudios bíblicos, de la cual es coautor. Sus pasiones en el ministerio son el crecimiento y la plantación de iglesias y la mayordomía.

## INTRODUCCIÓN

«Así que las iglesias eran animadas en la fe y aumentaban en número cada día» Hechos 16: 5

La correlación entre la Gran Comisión y la plantación de iglesias es asombrosa. Lucas nos recuerda que los nuevos discípulos se integraron en comunidades llamadas iglesias. Está escrito: «Así que, los que recibieron su palabra fueron bautizados, y se añadieron aquel día como tres mil personas. [...] Y el Señor añadía cada día a la iglesia los que habían de ser salvos». Hechos 2: 41, 47.

También es interesante que el libro de los Hechos esté impregnado de una cultura de multiplicación. Los discípulos, los líderes, las finanzas y las iglesias se multiplicaban. Dos veces el médico amado declara específicamente que las iglesias (gr. ἐκκλησία) crecían y se multiplicaban. (Hechos 9:31; 16: 5). Estas dinámicas micro-iglesias, reunidas en casas, Romanos 16: 3, 5 y guiadas por el Espíritu Santo, siguieron reproduciéndose sin templos ni estructuras complicadas.

Clifton Clint, en su libro: *Umbrales de plantación de iglesias (Church Planting Thresholds)*, señala que las iglesias hacen discípulos y los discípulos hacen iglesias y que el recurso más crítico y necesario es un líder verdaderamente dispuesto.<sup>243</sup>

Él afirma que las iglesias estadounidenses han estado tan ocupadas haciendo el ministerio, que han descuidado la misión. Luego cita: «Nuestro mayor potencial para el crecimiento del Reino se encuentra en las iglesias locales, cuyos ancianos y miembros se

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<sup>243</sup> Clifton Clint, «*Church Planting Thresholds: A Gospel-Centered Guide*» (Middletown, DE: New City Network, 2016) xvii.

dedican a capacitar y enviar miembros para plantar nuevas iglesias en las comunidades que las necesitan». <sup>244</sup>

¡Pienso que tiene razón! Como dijera una vez Elena G. de White: «*Sobre todos los que creen, Dios ha colocado la responsabilidad de levantar iglesias*». <sup>245</sup>

Thom S. Rainer, correctamente refiere, la bendición es que durante la pandemia de COVID-19 muchos miembros y líderes descubrieron que la iglesia seguía siendo la iglesia incluso sin las instalaciones. <sup>246</sup> Esto prueba una vez más que la plantación de iglesias es más que comenzar nuevos servicios religiosos. Se trata de misión: llegar a las personas donde están. «De hecho, el mundo digital abrió posibilidades que muchas congregaciones nunca habían considerado, y mucho menos probado». <sup>247</sup>

*Sí, debemos plantar todo tipo de iglesias, incluidas las iglesias en línea, siempre que se mantengan fieles a la verdad bíblica. Probablemente sea el momento de adaptar el viejo proverbio<sup>248</sup> y declarar: «Si la gente no viene a la Iglesia, la Iglesia irá a la gente».*

Una micro-iglesia no es un pequeño grupo de creyentes que se reúne periódicamente para dar estudios bíblicos y tener koinonia. En nuestra visión, es un grupo comprometido de discípulos listos para vivir y compartir el evangelio en el contexto de la

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<sup>244</sup> Clint, *Church Plating Thresholds*, xix.

<sup>245</sup> Elena G. de White, *La evangelización de las ciudades*. (México: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2012). Pág. 136

<sup>246</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *The Post-Quarantine Church: Six Urgent Challenges + Opportunities That Will Determine the Future of Your Congregation*. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2020). 17

<sup>247</sup> Rainer, *The Post-Quarantine Church*, 17.

<sup>248</sup> «Si la colina no va a Mahoma, Mahoma irá a la colina». Francis Bacon.

fe ASD, el cual comienza con 10 a 15 miembros reuniéndose de manera presencial o en línea, crece alrededor de 50 y luego se multiplica. Tiene todos los elementos de la iglesia del Nuevo Testamento, pero no agrega tradiciones ni parafernalias heredadas a través de los años.

Este libro fue escrito originalmente en inglés y traducido al español, por lo que el inglés es el estándar para verificar cualquier concepto. Está dividido en cuatro interesantes secciones. El capítulo uno (bíblico-teológico) trata de las conexiones entre la Gran Comisión y la plantación de iglesias. En tanto que el dos (bíblico-sociológico) explora la misión de la iglesia y la reunión de adoración en línea. El capítulo tres (sociológico) se centra en las generaciones vivientes, la espiritualidad y la asistencia a la iglesia, y el número cuatro (histórico) busca el impacto cronológico de la plantación de iglesias en la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día.

Finalmente, encontrará un modelo de multiplicación de plantación de micro-iglesias diseñado con Nueva York en mente, pero aplicable a muchos contextos similares. Bienvenido a esta fascinante visión que tiene el potencial de llevar a la iglesia al siguiente nivel.

## CAPÍTULO 1 LA GRAN COMISIÓN Y LA PLANTACIÓN DE IGLESIAS

### *Contexto Bíblico- Teológico*

#### *¿Cómo se relaciona la Gran Comisión con la plantación de iglesias?*

La Gran Comisión de San Mateo 28: 16-20 es la orden de marcha de la iglesia cristiana; sin embargo, para muchos creyentes, todavía no está claro qué quiso decir Jesús cuando dijo: «Por tanto, id y haced discípulos.» Este estudio propone que simplemente significa *ir y multiplicarse*. La iglesia primitiva obedeció este mandamiento predicando el arrepentimiento y el perdón de los pecados, Hechos 2: 38, bautizando a los que se arrepintieron, Hechos 2: 41 y agregándolos a las comunidades de creyentes llamadas iglesias, Hechos 2: 47, que a su vez siguieron multiplicándose (Hechos 16: 5).

Algunos críticos argumentan que la palabra misionero no aparece en el NT, a lo que Peyton Jones responde que sí aparece porque es parte del significado semántico de la palabra griega *ἀπόστολος*, apóstol, que significa uno que es enviado. De hecho, también se puede traducir como misionero.<sup>249</sup> Misión proviene de una palabra latina *missio* que significa «enviar». La familia de palabras es misil, transmisión, comisión. La Gran Comisión transmite la idea de «enviar juntos».

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<sup>249</sup> Peyton Jones, «*Church Zero: Raising 1<sup>st</sup> Century Churches out of the Ashes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church*» (Grand Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2013), 17.

Jones habla de apóstoles con mayúsculas para referirse a los 12 Apóstoles y apóstoles con minúsculas para referirse a individuos como Tito, 2 Corintios 8: 23, Santiago, el hermano de Jesús, Gálatas 1: 18- 19, Bernabé (Hechos 14: 14, Apolos 1 Corintios 4: 6-9, Andrónico Romanos 16: 7, Junias Romanos 16: 7, Epafrodito Filipenses 2: 25, Timoteo 1 Tesalonicenses 1: 1 - 2: 6, y Silas / Silvano 1 Tesalonicenses 1: 1- 2: 26. No eran de los doce, pero también eran llamados apóstoles en el sentido de misioneros y plantadores de iglesias (p. 19-20).<sup>250</sup>

Estos misioneros espectaculares y muchos otros que no se mencionan, son los héroes humanos detrás de las muchas iglesias que encontramos en el Nuevo Testamento. Para ellos, era imposible cumplir la gran comisión y no plantar nuevas iglesias. Pablo le dijo a Tito: «Por esta causa te dejé en Creta, para que corrigieras lo deficiente y establecieras ancianos en cada ciudad, así como yo te mandé.» Tito 1: 5. ¿Por qué necesitarían ancianos en cada ciudad? Porque plantaron iglesias en cada ciudad. La Gran Comisión es imposible de cumplir sin este elemento.

Como Craig y Wilson explican a la perfección:

Dos aspectos de la Gran Comisión, como se formula en San Mateo 28: 18–20, implican la plantación de iglesias: el mandato de bautizar y el mandato de enseñar obediencia a todo lo que Cristo ordenó. Estos son virtualmente imposibles de cumplir sin plantar iglesias. El mandato de bautizar nos recuerda que la conversión incluye la entrada a la nueva comunidad de Cristo. El bautismo a menudo se ve como un evento individualista. En realidad, es una confesión pública de arrepentimiento personal y fe, pero más allá de esto, indica recepción en el cuerpo de Cristo, la comunidad del nuevo reino. «Porque por un solo Espíritu fuimos todos bautizados en un cuerpo, tanto judíos como griegos, tanto esclavos como libres; y a todos se nos dio a beber de un mismo Espíritu» 1 Corintios 12: 13. Similar al bautismo de prosélitos entre los judíos, el bautismo

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<sup>250</sup> Jones, *Church Zero: Raising 1<sup>st</sup> Century Churches out of the Ashes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church*, 17.

cristiano primitivo indicaba la identificación con una comunidad, un significado que en gran parte hemos perdido hoy. En otras palabras, bautizar es abrazar a una comunidad cristiana, la iglesia.<sup>251</sup>

En el mismo contexto, los referidos expertos también citan al erudito Hans-Werner Gensichen, quien en 1971 escribió sobre el mandamiento de bautizar en San Mateo 28: «Abrazar a la iglesia se asume como parte integral de la misión» y luego comenta que el único ejemplo bíblico donde este no es el caso, es el bautismo del eunuco etíope en Hechos 8: 38–39. Además, en cuanto al componente de la enseñanza, declaran:

El mandato de enseñar obediencia también supone una participación comprometida en la nueva comunidad de Cristo. Predicar el evangelio y convertir a los perdidos solo comienza a cumplir la Gran Comisión. Los mandatos de Cristo no pueden ser guardados por un individuo en solitario, y el reino de Cristo no puede manifestarse aisladamente. Donde no haya comunidades de discípulos, deben crearse. La misión debe considerarse incompleta sin la plantación de iglesias entre todos los pueblos.<sup>252</sup>

### **La resurrección y la Gran Comisión**

Uno de los principales problemas al estudiar la gran comisión es el contexto. La mayoría de nosotros tendemos a ir directamente a San Mateo 28:18-20 cuando, en realidad, el contexto nos lleva al menos a los versículos 16-20. La Biblia no se dio originalmente en capítulos y versículos. Cada libro fue escrito sin interrupciones, aunque sabemos que al menos los Salmos estaban numerados. Hechos 13: 33

Con respecto a la división en capítulos, el erudito Don Stewart explica:

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<sup>251</sup> Ott, Craig, and Gene Wilson, «*Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*» (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 82.

<sup>252</sup> Ott, Craig, and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*, 82.

Las divisiones de libros individuales de las Escrituras en secciones más pequeñas comenzaron ya en el siglo IV d.C. El Códice Vaticano, un manuscrito griego del siglo IV, usaba divisiones de párrafos. Estos eran comparables a los que encontramos en los manuscritos de la Biblia hebrea. En el siglo V, el traductor bíblico Jerónimo dividió las Escrituras en breves porciones, o pasajes, llamados perícopas [...] La actual división de capítulos ocurrió mucho más tarde. Un hombre llamado Stephen Langton dividió la Biblia en capítulos en el año 1227 d.C. La Biblia que usó fue la Vulgata Latina. Langton era profesor en la Universidad de París en ese momento. Más tarde, se convirtió en arzobispo de Canterbury.<sup>253</sup>

La división moderna de versículos para el Nuevo Testamento fue obra del impresor francés Robert Stephanus. Dividió el texto griego en versículos para su Nuevo Testamento griego publicado en 1551. Estas divisiones han sido de hecho una bendición a los fines de citar, pero pueden causar algunos problemas exegéticos.

El exegeta debe asegurarse del contexto. Es vital prestar atención a los nexos gramaticales como las conjunciones. En nuestro pasaje, es evidente que la sesión comienza en el versículo 16. Dice:

<sup>16</sup> Pero los once discípulos se fueron a Galilea, al monte donde Jesús les había ordenado. <sup>17</sup> Cuando lo vieron, lo adoraron, aunque algunos dudaban. <sup>18</sup> Jesús se acercó y les habló diciendo: «Toda potestad me es dada en el cielo y en la tierra. <sup>19</sup> Por tanto, id y haced discípulos a todas las naciones, bautizándolos en el nombre del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo,<sup>20</sup> y enseñándoles que guarden todas las cosas que os he mandado. Y yo estoy con vosotros todos los días, hasta el fin del mundo». Amén. San Mateo 28: 16-20

Es notable que la palabra griega *Oi δέ* (partícula adversativa o continuativa traducida como «pero», «además», e «y»)) conecta este pasaje distinto con el relato principal del capítulo. También es relevante que mientras que la NKJV traduce la

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<sup>253</sup> «Why Is the Bible Divided into Chapters and Verses? por Don Stewart». Blue Letter Bible. Consulta 5 Julio 2020. [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart\\_don/faq/bible-special/question8-why-is-the-bible-divided-into-chapters-and-verses.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart_don/faq/bible-special/question8-why-is-the-bible-divided-into-chapters-and-verses.cfm).



partícula como «entonces», la *Word English Bible, The American Standard Version* y la *Aramaic Bible in Plain English*, la traducen como «pero», destacando su elemento adversativo.

Todo el contexto de San Mateo 28 es la resurrección de Jesús. Es evidente, como dice Greenway: «Cada uno de los cuatro evangelios termina con una gran comisión después de narrar la resurrección de Cristo».<sup>254</sup> Hay tres elementos comunes en los cuatro evangelios: la tumba vacía, el anuncio de la resurrección a las mujeres y el encuentro de Jesús con sus discípulos.<sup>255</sup> Además, la historia justo antes de la gran comisión es el informe falso de los guardias. Mateo explica:

<sup>11</sup> Mientras ellas iban, unos de la guardia fueron a la ciudad y dieron aviso a los principales sacerdotes de todas las cosas que habían acontecido. <sup>12</sup> Estos se reunieron con los ancianos y, después de ponerse de acuerdo, dieron mucho dinero a los soldados, <sup>13</sup> diciéndoles: «Decid vosotros: “Sus discípulos llegaron de noche y lo hurtaron mientras nosotros estábamos dormidos”. <sup>14</sup> Y si esto lo oye el gobernador, nosotros lo persuadiremos y os pondremos a salvo». <sup>15</sup> Ellos tomaron el dinero e hicieron como se les había instruido. Este dicho se ha divulgado entre los judíos hasta el día de hoy. San Mateo 28: 11-14

La traducción de *Oi δέ* en su connotación adversativa tiene perfecto sentido, ya que el relato de la gran comisión deja en claro que el Salvador ciertamente resucitó. Elena G. de White comenta :

Al ver a los ángeles y al glorificado Salvador, los guardias romanos se habían desmayado y caído como muertos. Cuando el séquito celestial quedó oculto de su vista, se levantaron y tan prestamente como los podían llevar sus temblorosos miembros se encaminaron hacia la puerta del jardín. Tambaleándose como borrachos, se dirigieron apresuradamente a la ciudad contando las nuevas maravillosas a cuantos encontraban. Iban a donde estaba Pilato, pero su informe

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51 <sup>254</sup> Roger Greenway S, «*Vayan y Hagan Discípulos!*» (Grand Rapids, MI: Libros Desafío, 2004)

<sup>255</sup> Leon, Morris. «*The Gospel According to Matthew*» (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013).

fue llevado a las autoridades judías, y los sumos sacerdotes y príncipes ordenaron que fuesen traídos primero a su presencia. Estos soldados ofrecían una extraña apariencia. Temblorosos de miedo, con los rostros pálidos, daban testimonio de la resurrección de Cristo. Contaron todo como lo habían visto; no habían tenido tiempo para pensar ni para decir otra cosa que la verdad, Con dolorosa entonación dijeron: Fue el Hijo de Dios quien fue crucificado; hemos oído a un ángel proclamarle Majestad del cielo, Rey de gloria. <sup>256</sup>

Hay que proclamar esta gran noticia. La Gran Comisión de Jesús dominaría la gran comisión de Satanás, la negación de la resurrección, con la proclamación de un Salvador resucitado. El primer compromiso de los nuevos discípulos fue creer en la resurrección y proclamarla.

### **Una exégesis a la Gran Comisión**

En esta investigación exegética se seguirán los principios básicos del método histórico-gramatical. Este enfoque hermenéutico examina la intención original de los autores bíblicos en el texto. <sup>257</sup> Es un desarrollo de Lutero, Calvino, Zwinglio, John Knox y otros reformadores protestantes. Un aspecto clave de este método es el análisis de verbos y participios. Leamos San Mateo 28: 16-20 seguido del texto griego:

<sup>16</sup> Pero los once discípulos se fueron a Galilea, al monte donde Jesús les había ordenado. <sup>17</sup> Cuando lo vieron, lo adoraron, aunque algunos dudaban <sup>18</sup> Jesús se acercó y les habló diciendo: «Toda potestad me es dada en el cielo y en la tierra. <sup>19</sup> Por tanto, id y haced discípulos a todas las naciones, bautizándolos en el nombre del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo, <sup>20</sup> y enseñándoles que guarden todas las cosas que os he mandado. Y yo estoy con vosotros todos los días, hasta el fin del mundo». Amén.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Elena G. de White, «*El Deseado de todas las gentes*» (Miami, FL: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2007) 741

<sup>257</sup> George, Reid W, «*Entender Las sagradas escrituras: El enfoque adventista*» (Bogotá: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2009)

<sup>258</sup> *Biblia Reina Valera 1995 (R95)*

<sup>16</sup> Οἱ δὲ ἑνδεκα μαθηταὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, <sup>17</sup> καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν. <sup>18</sup> καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς. <sup>19</sup> **πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε** πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, **βαπτίζοντες** αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, <sup>20</sup> **διδάσκοντες** αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. (ΜΑΘΘΑΙΟΝ 28: 16-20)<sup>259</sup>

En este texto encontramos los siguientes participios: 1) *πορευθέντες*: *Aoristo*

*pasivo deponente participio nominativo plural masculino de πορεύω, ir* 2) *βαπτίζοντες*:

Presente activo participio nominativo plural masculino de *βαπτίζω*, bautizar

3) *διδάσκοντες*:

Presente activo participio nominativo plural masculino de *διδάσκω*, enseñar; *πορευθέντες* es un participio pasado de circunstancia mientras que *βαπτίζοντες* y *διδάσκοντες* son participios de medios.<sup>260</sup>

Un participio es un adjetivo verbal. Eso significa que tiene cualidades verbales y cualidades adjetivas. «Tiene voz y tiempo como un verbo, pero tiene género, caso y número como un adjetivo. Como verbo, un participio puede tomar un objeto o usarse como modificador adverbial. Como adjetivo, se puede usar de cualquier forma que se pueda utilizar un adjetivo regular y se declina en los tres géneros, en todos los casos y en ambos números».<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Nestle Aland Novum Testamentum Greece: Read NA28 Online. Accessed July 5, 2020. <https://www.nestle-aland.com/en/read-na28-online/text/bibeltext/lesen/stelle/50/280001/289999/>.

<sup>260</sup> Daniel B. Wallace and Daniel S. Steffen, «Gramática Griega: Sintaxis Del Nuevo Testamento» (Miami, FL: Vida Pub., 2015) 500.

<sup>261</sup> Sunset, «Introduction to Greek Grammar», Consulta 5 Julio 2020, <https://www.sunsetonline.org/dl/outlines/grk1/19.pdf>

El primer participio (πορευθέντες), sin embargo, es diferente de los dos últimos. Como ya mencioné, es un participio de circunstancia, que precede a un verbo principal aoristo imperativo. Wallace refiere: «Prácticamente todos los ejemplos en el participio aoristo más el imperativo aoristo incluyen un participio circunstancial que lo acompaña».<sup>262</sup>

El participio de circunstancia toma el modo del verbo principal. San Mateo 2:13 es un ejemplo específico de esta regla. Está escrito: «Después que partieron ellos, un ángel del Señor apareció en sueños a José y le dijo: «Levántate, (Ἐγερθεῖς / aoristo pasivo participio nominativo singular masculino), toma (παράλαβε / segundo aoristo activo imperativo segunda persona singular) al niño y a su madre, y huye a Egipto. Permanece allá hasta que yo te diga, porque acontecerá que Herodes buscará al niño para matarlo».

Wallace explica que el contexto deja claro que el verdadero significado del participio «levántate» actúa semánticamente como una parte imperativa del mandato de tomar al niño. De la misma manera, πορευθέντες, no debe traducirse como participio (yendo), sino como imperativo (id, vayan), aunque sabemos que no lo es.<sup>263</sup>

Otro caso similar es San Mateo 9:13: «Id, pues, (πορευθέντες) y aprended (μάθετε) lo que significa: “Misericordia quiero y no sacrificios”, porque no he venido a llamar a justos, sino a pecadores al arrepentimiento». Aquí los traductores siguen el mismo principio.

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<sup>262</sup> Wallace, *Gramática Griega: Sintaxis Del Nuevo Testamento*, 500

<sup>263</sup> Wallace, *Gramática Griega: Sintaxis Del Nuevo Testamento*, 496

En la Gran Comisión, el único verbo que está en imperativo es *μαθητεύσατε* (discipulen, o hagan discípulos), aoristo activo imperativo segunda persona plural. «Por tanto, id y haced discípulos a todas las naciones», es una traducción muy precisa. La implicación es que Jesús le ordenó a la iglesia que hiciera discípulos. La Gran Comisión no es una gran sugerencia. Las teorías que interpretan «mientras vais haced discípulos,» en lugar de «id y haced discípulos» pueden ser homiléticas pero no exegéticas.

Todd Wilson enfatiza:

La multiplicación saludable que hace avanzar el reino requiere que cumplamos el mandato de Jesús de hacer discípulos sumando... ¡Debemos hacer discípulos e ir! Si nuestros esfuerzos de hacer discípulos no conducen a la multiplicación en la forma de iniciar nuevas comunidades de fe, entonces ¿qué nos dice eso sobre la salud de nuestros esfuerzos? El «ir» en la Gran Comisión de Jesús es inseparable de la multiplicación de nuevas iglesias. Hacer discípulos no es suficiente si no produce el «ir».<sup>264</sup>

También es importante aclarar que la traducción de la KJV «Por tanto, id enseñad<sup>265</sup> a todas las naciones, bautizándolos en el nombre del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo,» es totalmente inexacta. El verbo griego *διδάσκω* (enseñar) nunca se usa en el versículo 19. Una vez más, el imperativo que se usa aquí es *μαθητεύσατε* (discipulen, discipulad, o hagan discípulos). Es justo decir que el error se corrige en la NKJV.

*βαπτίζοντες* y *διδάσκοντες* son participios de medios. Wallace explica:

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<sup>264</sup> Todd Wilson, and Carl F. George, *Multipliers: Leading beyond Addition* (United States: Exponential, 2017).

<sup>265</sup> La versión de la Biblia del Jubileo, traduce «id y enseñad» lo cual es incorrecto. La RVR y la RVA traducen id y doctrinad, lo cual también es incorrecto.

No deben tomarse como participios de circunstancias acompañantes. Primero, no se ajustan al patrón regular de estos (están en tiempo presente y van después del verbo principal). En segundo lugar, tienen sentido como participios de medios.<sup>266</sup> El bautismo y la enseñanza eran los medios para hacer discípulos, y esto es lo que encontramos en el libro de los Hechos. El erudito Henry Alford agrega: «Ambos participios presentes son los componentes condicionantes del aoristo imperativo que los precede. El μαθητεύειν consta de dos partes: el rito de iniciación, el rito de admisión y la enseñanza subsiguiente».<sup>267</sup>

Bill Hull no pudo ser más específico cuando afirmó: «Con dos palabras, bautizar y enseñar, Jesús aclaró el proceso de hacer discípulos».<sup>268</sup> Es sencillo, bautizar nuevos discípulos significa hacer que profesen su fe; la enseñanza es un proceso que dura toda la vida. Jesús dijo muy claro : «Enseñándoles que guarden todas las cosas que os he mandado». San Mateo 28: 20.

Finalmente, el discipulado es una relación con el Cristo viviente. «El discipulado es el proceso de llegar a ser como Jesús. Las clases de discipulado por sí solas no lo harán. Las formas religiosas no lo harán. La relación personal entre discípulo y maestro es el meollo del discipulado».<sup>269</sup>

### **Una visión tridimensional de la Gran Comisión**

El resultado de la Gran Comisión es hacer discípulos. Los discípulos producen discípulos, no fuerzan discípulos, es decir, no obligan. Los misioneros de Jesús debían ir

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<sup>266</sup> Wallace, *Gramática Griega: Sintaxis Del Nuevo Testamento*, 500

<sup>267</sup> Henry Alford, «Commentary on Matthew 28: 4». Greek Testament Critical Exegetical Commentary. <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/hac/matthew-28.html>. 1863-1878.

<sup>268</sup> Hull, Bill, «*The Disciple-Making Church: Leading a Body of Believers on the Journey of Faith*» (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010) 56.

<sup>269</sup> Jim Howard, Kameron DeVasher, Mark Howard, Staci Schefka, Jeff Akenberger, Gene Hall, Tom Hubbard, Justin Ringstaff, and Hélène Thomas, «*Discipleship Handbook: A Resource for Seventh-Day Adventist Church Members*» (Lansing, MI: The Training Center Church Committee of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2015).

a predicar. El Señor los llamó a proclamar la resurrección y algunas otras verdades fundamentales, y luego bautizar a quienes las aceptaron.

Estos nuevos creyentes nacieron en el reino de Dios como misioneros.<sup>270</sup> Hull expone: «Hacer discípulos incluía introducir a las personas a Cristo, edificarlas en la fe y enviarlas al campo de cosecha».<sup>271</sup> El resume de este proceso mediante lo que llama las tres D de la formación de discípulos: distribuir, desarrollar y desplegar.

Como siempre pasa, algunas personas aceptaban el mensaje y otras no. Los discípulos debían dar seguimiento a los que recibieron las buenas nuevas. Eran instrumentos de reconciliación en nombre de Cristo. 2 Corintios 5: 20.

Por otro lado, los apóstoles sabían muy bien qué hacer cuando se resistían a su mensaje. Jesús había dicho en una ocasión anterior: «Si alguien no os recibe ni oye vuestras palabras, salid de aquella casa o ciudad y sacudid el polvo de vuestros pies. De cierto os digo que en el día del juicio será más tolerable el castigo para la tierra de Sodoma y de Gomorra que para aquella ciudad». San Mateo 10: 14-15.

Significa que los discípulos tenían la responsabilidad profética de compartir las nuevas, pero no podían obligar a la gente a aceptarla. Recibir el mensaje depende de los oyentes. Ezequiel 2: 7. Los profetas eran los heraldos de Dios Éxodo 7: 1-2 y Jeremías 1: 4-10. Su función principal era comunicar las palabras de Dios. Su propósito iba mucho más allá de simplemente repetir lo que escuchaban. Los profetas eran predicadores que

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<sup>270</sup> Elena G. de White, «*El Deseado de todas las gentes*» (Miami, FL: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2007)

<sup>271</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Church: Leading a Body of Believers on the Journey of Faith*, 54.

hablaban las palabras de Dios para cambiar la forma de pensar y de obrar de sus oyentes.<sup>272</sup>

Sí, la misión es hacer discípulos, alcanzar personas para el reino (dimensión apostólica de la gran comisión). Las personas que no aceptan el mensaje, al menos, se les predica, siempre que quieran escuchar (la dimensión profética).

Por esta razón, es fundamental tener una visión tridimensional de la gran comisión. Ver en 3D significa la capacidad de percibir la altura, el ancho y la profundidad. Es la percepción adicional de profundidad lo que hace que la visión estereoscópica o 3D sea tan importante.

Los evangelios dan esta visión tridimensional. Juan enfatiza el ancho (la extensión) de la gran comisión. «Entonces Jesús les dijo otra vez: ¡Paz a vosotros! Como me envió el Padre, así también yo os envío». San Juan 20: 21. Simplemente declara que su misión era una continuación de la misión de Dios. Cristo llama a todos sus seguidores a ser sus colegas y colaboradores en su misión.<sup>273</sup> Esta dimensión se refleja en muchas otras partes, enfatizando la idea de llevar el evangelio a todo el mundo. San Mateo 24: 14; Hechos 1: 8; Apocalipsis 14: 6-13.

El primer encuentro del Salvador resucitado y sus discípulos en Lucas, al igual que en Juan, ocurrió la primera noche después de la resurrección. Está escrito:

45 Entonces les abrió el entendimiento para que comprendieran las Escrituras; 46 y les dijo: Así está escrito, y así fue necesario que el Cristo padeciera y resucitara de los muertos al tercer día; 47 y que se predicara en su nombre el arrepentimiento y el perdón de pecados en todas las naciones, comenzando desde

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<sup>272</sup> Gary V. Smith, «*Los Profetas Como Predicadores: Introducción a Los Profetas Hebreos*». (Nashville, TN: B & H Español, 2012), 6

<sup>273</sup> Greenway, *Vayan y Hagan Discípulos!*, 22



Jerusalén. 48 Vosotros sois testigos de estas cosas. 49 Ciertamente, yo enviaré la promesa de mi Padre sobre vosotros; pero quedaos vosotros en la ciudad de Jerusalén hasta que seáis investidos de poder desde lo alto. San Lucas 24: 45-49.

Es fantástico que en Lucas, no solo tengamos la amplitud o extensión de la gran comisión (predicar a todas las naciones) sino también la altura. El contenido de la misma (predicar el arrepentimiento y el perdón de los pecados). Veremos el cumplimiento de estos mandamientos en el libro de los Hechos.

San Marcos 16: 15-16 toca la anchura, la altura y la profundidad: «Y les dijo: Id por todo el mundo (anchura) y predicad el evangelio (altura) a toda criatura. El que crea y sea bautizado, será salvo (profundidad); pero el que no crea, será condenado». Finalmente, Mateo es la cereza del pastel, ya que amplifica el objetivo de la gran comisión. La profundidad o el propósito de la Gran Comisión es hacer discípulos. Vayan y prediquen; bauticen, enseñen. El resultado no es otro que los discípulos.

### **La respuesta de la iglesia primitiva a la Gran Comisión**

Los evangelios no informan de la reacción de los discípulos a la Gran Comisión, pero el libro de los Hechos sí. Lo primero que encontramos en el relato es la unidad, la oración y la consagración, Hechos 2: 1. Jesús les dijo que esperaran por el Espíritu Santo, San Lucas 24:49, y así lo hicieron.

Después de la unción del Espíritu, se observa a los discípulos, no solo a los doce, predicando y enseñando. Muy interesante, la mayoría de los sermones del libro concluyen con un llamado al arrepentimiento y al perdón de los pecados. Hechos 2: 37-38; 3:19-20; 5:31; 17: 30-31. Los apóstoles recibieron este mandato de Jesús, quien les dijo inmediatamente después de la resurrección: «y que se predicara en su nombre el

arrepentimiento y el perdón de pecados en todas las naciones, comenzando desde Jerusalén» San Lucas 24:47.

Este mismo mensaje se puede encontrar en todo el libro de los Hechos, comenzando con el primer sermón de Pedro: «Pedro les dijo: Arrepentíos y bautícese cada uno de vosotros en el nombre de Jesucristo para perdón de los pecados, y recibiréis el don del Espíritu Santo». Hechos 2:38. Los nuevos conversos fueron bautizados y recibieron el prometido perdón de los pecados. En el primer culto, el día de Pentecostés, se bautizaron unas tres mil personas Hechos 2:41.

Lo mismo sucedió cuando Pedro y Juan fueron llamados ante el Sanedrín, Hechos 5:27. Pedro concluyó: «A este, Dios ha exaltado con su diestra por Príncipe y Salvador, para dar a Israel arrepentimiento y perdón de pecados». Hechos 5:31. Estos poderosos mensajes impresionaron los corazones y miles se bautizaron.<sup>274</sup>

Después de un primer bautismo tan significativo, la pregunta probablemente sería: ¿dónde reunir a un grupo tan grande para la adoración? En muchos casos, confesar a Jesús equivalía a ser expulsado de la iglesia y la familia. Los discípulos habían aprendido de Jesús la importancia del *oikos* (la palabra griega para hogar y casa), y el ministerio a pequeñas comunidades de creyentes en sus contextos. Se nos dice que Jesús envió a sus doce y a sus setenta discípulos para sanar y enseñar de aldea en aldea y de casa en casa,

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<sup>274</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, Shawn D. Wright, and E. Ray Clendenen. *«Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ»* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2006).

San Lucas 9: 1-9; 10: 1-11. Joel Comiskey investigó el ministerio de Jesús en los hogares y esto es lo que encontró:<sup>275</sup>

Jesús en la casa de Pedro, San Mateo 8: 14

Jesús en la casa de Mateo, San Mateo 9: 10

Jesús en la casa de Zaqueo, San Lucas 19: 1-10

Jesús en la casa de Lázaro y sus hermanas, San Lucas 10: 38-42

Jesús en la casa de Jairo, San Marcos 5: 35-38

Jesús sana a dos ciegos en una casa, San Mateo 9: 28-30

Jesús en la casa de Simón el leproso, San Mateo 26: 6

Jesús enseñando a sus discípulos en una casa, San Marcos 7: 17-18; 9: 33; 10: 10

Jesús perdona y sana a un paralítico en una casa, San Lucas 5: 19

Jesús en la casa de un fariseo, San Lucas 14: 1

Jesús instituyó la cena del Señor en una casa, San Mateo 26: 18

Después de Pentecostés, los discípulos, siguiendo el ejemplo de Jesús también se reunían en el templo y en los hogares. Partían el pan en sus casas, comían juntos con corazones alegres y sinceros y alababan a Dios y disfrutaban del favor de todo el pueblo. El Señor añadía cada día los que habían de ser salvos. Hechos 2: 46-47.

Es evidente que después de aquel gran bautismo, muchas personas se quedaron con los discípulos. Formaban parte de la nueva familia cristiana. Establecieron iglesias. No poseían un santuario, pero aun así, eran la iglesia. Ir y hacer discípulos fue un llamado

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<sup>275</sup> Joel Comiskey, «*Making Disciples in the Twenty-First Century Church: How the Cell-Based Church Shapes Followers of Jesus*» (Moreno, CA: CCS Publishing, 2013) 61.

a orar, predicar, enseñar, bautizar y organizar a los nuevos creyentes en pequeñas congregaciones llamadas iglesias.<sup>276</sup> Hechos 14: 21-23.

### **Iglesias en los hogares en la iglesia primitiva**

Lo primero que aprendemos sobre la iglesia en el libro de los Hechos es su sencillez. La iglesia se define como la asamblea que se reúne para adorar al Salvador resucitado. Era «el medio designado para la salvación de los hombres»<sup>277</sup> Hechos 2:47 dice claramente que el Señor añadía a la iglesia (ἐκκλησία) cada día, los que habían de ser salvos. En griego, *ekklesia* era una palabra familiar. Desde el siglo V a. C. en adelante, se refería a la «asamblea» regular de ciudadanos en una ciudad para decidir asuntos que afectan su bienestar.<sup>278</sup>

De la misma manera, aprendemos que los grandes edificios con vitrales no son la iglesia. «Si le hubieras pedido a alguien indicaciones para llegar a una iglesia en cualquier ciudad importante del mundo del primer siglo, ¿te habrían dirigido a la casa privada de alguien!»<sup>279</sup>

En el libro de los Hechos, los creyentes eran la iglesia. No tenían una liturgia elaborada propia y todavía seguían la mayoría de los ritos judíos. Sin embargo, eran una entidad diferente. «La iglesia no es un centro cívico, ni un club social ni, un grupo de

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<sup>276</sup> Raoul Dederen «*Teología: Fundamentos Bíblicos De Nuestra Fe*» (Bogotá: Asoc. Publicadora Interamericana -Gema, 2007).

<sup>277</sup> Elena G. de White, *Los hechos de los apóstoles*. (Nampa, Ida.: Pacific Press Pub. Association, 2009) 9.

<sup>278</sup> Robert Banks, «*Paul's Idea of Community: Spirit and Culture in Early House Churches*» (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic a Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2020).

<sup>279</sup> Del Birkey, «*The House Church*» (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988) 40.

encuentro, ni un lugar de reunión del sábado por la mañana. Es una nueva sociedad, creada para la salvación de un mundo perdido, que señala al reino venidero».<sup>280</sup>

Para Wayne Grudem, la iglesia es la congregación de todos los salvos.<sup>281</sup> Jesús describió a la iglesia como un organismo vivo proactivo cuando dijo que «las puertas del Hades no la dominarán» San Mateo 16: 18. El apóstol Pablo declara la misma idea en Efesios 1: 22-23, donde afirma: «Y sometió todas las cosas debajo de sus pies, y lo dio por cabeza sobre todas las cosas a la iglesia, la cual es su cuerpo, la plenitud de Aquel que todo lo llena en todo».

La iglesia no es un edificio, un programa o una denominación. La iglesia es el pueblo santo de Dios.

Lutero prefería con mucho la frase «un pueblo cristiano santo» (*Sancta Catholica Christiana*) a la simple palabra «iglesia» (*Ecclesia*). *Ecclesia*, pensaba, a menudo se considera el edificio de la iglesia, un uso muy desafortunado; ocasionalmente se usa para referirse a los cristianos en cualquier área o época en particular, y esto es algo mejor; pero en realidad, la iglesia es la comunión de todos los santos cristianos de todos los tiempos, realidad que la palabra «Iglesia» oscurece. Lutero sentía que los abusos de la jerarquía papal podrían haberse reducido si *ecclesia* se hubiera entendido como «un pueblo cristiano santo», el verdadero significado del cuerpo de Cristo. En alemán, Lutero prefería palabras para la Iglesia como *Haufe* (grupo) o *Versammlung* (asamblea) en lugar de palabras como *Gemeinschaft* (asociación).<sup>282</sup>

Según la Biblia, la iglesia es el cuerpo de Cristo, todos aquellos que han puesto su fe en Jesucristo para salvación, San Juan 3: 16 y 1 Corintios 12: 13. «Las iglesias locales

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<sup>280</sup> Rex D. Edwards. «*Every Believer the Church*» (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2013)15

<sup>281</sup> Wayne A Grudem, «*Teología Sistemática: Una Introducción a La Doctrina Bíblica*» (Miami: Editorial Vida, 2009).

<sup>282</sup> Rex D. Edwards, “*Every Believer the Church*” “Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2013, En estudios de la comisión sobre el papel de la mujer en <https://www.adventistarchives.org/the-priesthood-of-believers.pdf>, Consultado el 22 de julio de 2020.

son reuniones de personas que reclaman el nombre de Cristo. Los miembros de una iglesia local pueden ser o no miembros de la iglesia universal, dependiendo de la autenticidad de su fe. La iglesia local es donde los creyentes pueden aplicar plenamente los principios del «cuerpo» de 1 Corintios 12: animarse, enseñarse y edificarse unos a otros en el conocimiento y la gracia del Señor Jesucristo».<sup>283</sup>

En Hechos 10 vemos a Pedro evangelizando en la casa de Cornelio, en capítulo 12, observamos que él, liberado de la prisión, fue directamente a la casa de María, donde muchos estaban reunidos intercediendo. Hechos 12: 24.

Con respecto a la reunión de oración en el hogar de Hechos 12, Del Birkey, citando a F.F. Bruce, declara:

La mención de una reunión de oración en la casa de María, la madre de Marcos (Hechos 12: 12), es una prueba más de que cuando querían reunirse, ningún lugar era adecuado excepto las casas de los miembros. Es de notar que esta reunión de oración aparentemente no fue una reunión de toda la iglesia de Jerusalén, sino solo una de las otras iglesias en los hogares. La evidencia de este fenómeno aumenta cuando, como señala F. F. Bruce, aparentemente Pedro y Santiago no pertenecían a la misma iglesia de hogar. «Si Pedro pertenecía al grupo que se reunió en la casa de María [...] sabía que Santiago y “los hermanos” (quienes quiera que fueren) se encontraban en otro lugar Hechos 12: 17».<sup>284</sup>

De manera similar, en el Nuevo Testamento se mencionan otras iglesias en varias casas: la casa de Priscila y Aquila, Romanos 16: 3-5; 1 Corintios 16: 19 ; la casa de Filemón Filemón 2 y la casa de Ninfas, Colosenses 4:15 que sirvieron como templos para albergar a las congregaciones nacientes. Algunos textos que apoyan este concepto son:

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<sup>283</sup> GotQuestions.org. «Home» GotQuestions.org. Last modified May 15, 2009. Consulta 22 Julio 2020 <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-the-church.html>.

<sup>284</sup> Birkey, *The House Church*, 42

- «Porque donde están dos o tres congregados en mi nombre, allí estoy yo en medio de ellos». San Mateo 18: 20
- «Y perseveraban en la doctrina de los apóstoles, en la comunión unos con otros, en el partimiento del pan y en las oraciones». Hechos 2: 42
- «Perseveraban unánimes cada día en el Templo, y partiendo el pan en las casas comían juntos con alegría y sencillez de corazón». Hechos 2: 46
- «Y todos los días, en el Templo y por las casas, incesantemente, enseñaban y predicaban a Jesucristo». Hechos 5: 42
- «Y cómo nada que fuera útil he rehuido de anunciaros y enseñaros, públicamente y por las casas». Hechos 20: 20
- «Así que las iglesias eran animadas en la fe y aumentaban en número cada día». (Hechos 16: 5
- «Las iglesias de Asia os saludan. Aquila y Priscila, con la iglesia que está en su casa». 1 Corintios 16: 19
- «Saludad a los hermanos que están en Laodicea, a Ninfas y a la iglesia que está en su casa». Colosenses 4: 15
- «A la amada hermana Apia, a Arquipo, nuestro compañero de milicia, y a la iglesia que está en tu casa». Filemón 1: 2

Es vital aclarar que estos textos no son sobre grupos pequeños que se reúnen en casas. Estas eran las congregaciones típicas en ese momento. «La evidencia arqueológica sugiere que un hogar de tamaño promedio podría acomodar bien de 30 a 35 personas. Aunque en sentido general no existe ningún edificio de iglesia construido antes de Constantino, hay casas que fueron reestructuradas para las asambleas cristianas. Graydon F. Snyder encuentra asombroso que no tengamos más restos de tales iglesias en casa, y

añade que, de hecho, podemos tener restos de las tales pero no las podemos reconocer».<sup>285</sup>

«Aunque Nerón, Trajano y otros líderes romanos reprimieron el cristianismo al prohibir las reuniones públicas, el Espíritu de Dios todavía se movía. Antes del 300 d.C., solo hay una referencia histórica a un edificio para reuniones cristianas, y ese edificio estaba en Persia, fuera del imperio romano».<sup>286</sup>

Estas iglesias en casas superaron el decreto de Nerón contra cualquier edificio de iglesia en el 64 d.C. También sobrevivieron a los decretos del emperador Trajano (64-117 d.C.) contra las sociedades secretas. ¡Alabado sea el Señor!

### **Una cultura de multiplicación en la iglesia primitiva**

Después de crear a Adán y Eva, el Señor les dijo que fructificaran y se multiplicaran, Génesis 1: 29. De la misma manera, después de darnos vida mediante su muerte y resurrección, se nos ha dado el mandato de hacer discípulos, es decir, de multiplicarnos espiritualmente.

Todd Wilson declara audazmente:

«Una visión arraigada en la multiplicación transmite un fuerte compromiso de enviar y liberar discípulos para plantar iglesias que plantan iglesias. Cuando nuestra visión es más grande que el crecimiento y la expansión de nuestro reino (su iglesia, su

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<sup>285</sup> Birkey, *The House Church*, 55

<sup>286</sup> Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups: from Theory to Reality*, 161



red, su denominación, etc.), el fruto de la formación de discípulos produce iglesias que plantan iglesias, en última instancia, creciendo y expandiendo el Reino de Dios».<sup>287</sup>

Los primeros discípulos tuvieron esa visión de multiplicación. El crecimiento de la Iglesia primitiva fue exponencial. En el libro de los Hechos, Jesús instruye a los apóstoles sobre su misión. En el día de Pentecostés, 120 estaban en el aposento alto. En particular, Lucas quiere destacar el rápido crecimiento del movimiento, que se confirma con el bautismo de unas tres mil personas el día de Pentecostés. Hechos 2: 41

El progreso fue imparable, hasta el punto que Hechos 4: 2 habla de unos cinco mil creyentes. Más adelante en Hechos 6: 2, se les llama multitud. Esto se vuelve a confirmar en Hechos 6: 7, que dice: «La palabra del Señor crecía y el número de los discípulos se multiplicaba grandemente en Jerusalén; también muchos de los sacerdotes obedecían a la fe». Hechos 6: 9

Este crecimiento numérico no se detuvo. Lo que sigue a continuación es una explosión evangelística, no solo en Jerusalén sino en todo el mundo gentil. Sin embargo, el crecimiento no fue solo en términos de números. Es notable que a pesar de las privaciones tenían , suficiente provisión para todos. Hechos 2: 45

En términos de liderazgo, la cultura de multiplicación de la iglesia primitiva es rica. Comienza con los doce, en particular Pedro, Juan y Santiago, Gálatas 2: 9. Entonces, aparecen los siete creyentes de Hechos 6, escogidos para servir a las viudas, de los cuales surgen dos nuevos líderes, Esteban y Felipe. Este Felipe también tuvo cuatro hijas que profetizaban. Hechos 21: 9.

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<sup>287</sup> Todd Wilson, and Carl F. George, *Multipliers: Leading beyond Addition*, 45

A partir de Hechos 9, hay una renovación en el liderazgo. Se destaca la conversión de Saulo de Tarso, que muy pronto se convertiría en el apóstol Pablo. Con él, el liderazgo del primer siglo alcanza un nuevo nivel. Sin embargo, no solo surge Pablo, la propagación del evangelio involucra nuevos líderes como:

- Ananías y Dorcas en Hechos 9
- Cornelio en Hechos 10
- Bernabé en Hechos 11
- Simeón llamado Níger, Lucio de Cirene y Manaén en Hechos 13.

Después del segundo viaje misionero de Pablo, se destacan líderes jóvenes como Timoteo y parejas misioneras como Aquila y Priscila. El propio Lucas es un líder clave del momento. Empresarios ricos, como Lidia, dieron sus vidas a Jesús. Hechos 16. Además, el tiempo me faltaría para mencionar precursores como Apolos en Hechos 18, los ancianos que se reunieron en Éfeso, Hechos 20, y muchos más introducidos en el libro de Hechos y las epístolas.

Sorprendentemente, la iglesia primitiva no solo estaba creciendo en nuevos discípulos, finanzas y liderazgo. También estaba aumentando el número de nuevas iglesias. A pesar de la persecución y todo tipo de dificultades, iban creciendo. Hechos 9: 31 enfatiza: «Entonces las iglesias tenían paz por toda Judea, Galilea y Samaria; eran edificadas, andando en el temor del Señor, y se acrecentaban fortalecidas por el Espíritu Santo».

La multiplicación de discípulos, líderes y finanzas también debe llevar a la multiplicación de iglesias. De la misma manera, cuando las iglesias crecen en la fe, son

saludables y deben multiplicarse. Hechos 16: 5 testifica: «Así que las iglesias eran animadas en la fe y aumentaban en número cada día».

El experto en crecimiento de iglesias Donald McGavran aclara este asunto aún más al decir que el primer obstáculo común para la multiplicación de iglesias nunca apareció en la iglesia primitiva, es decir, el costo de construir edificios. La iglesia del hogar superó el obstáculo de la introversión, al exponerse una nueva sección de la sociedad en cada nueva iglesia en casa. McGavran agrega, «El factor de la iglesia en casa debe tomarse en consideración en cualquier evaluación de las causas del crecimiento de la iglesia primitiva».<sup>288</sup>

Es cierto que al principio, fue difícil para los discípulos salir de Jerusalén, pero Jesús especificó que el evangelio debía ir a Jerusalén, a Judea, y hasta el fin del mundo. Hechos 1: 8. Se dice que dado que los apóstoles no quisieron obedecer Hechos 1: 8, Dios envió Hechos 8:1. El primer versículo aborda la misión, el segundo trata sobre la persecución. Similar a los israelitas en los tiempos de Josué, los apóstoles dejan de conquistar. Josué 13: 13-15. En esta ocasión, Dios permitió que se persiguiera a su pueblo.

Elena de White explica:

La persecución que sobrevino a la iglesia de Jerusalén dio gran impulso a la obra del Evangelio. El éxito había acompañado la ministración de la palabra en ese lugar, y había peligro de que los discípulos permanecieran demasiado tiempo allí, desatendiendo la comisión del Salvador de ir a todo el mundo. Olvidando que la fuerza para resistir al mal se obtiene mejor mediante el servicio agresivo, comenzaron a pensar que no tenían ninguna obra tan importante como la de proteger a la iglesia de Jerusalén de los ataques del enemigo. En vez de enseñar a los nuevos conversos a llevar el Evangelio a aquellos que no lo habían oído, corrían el peligro de adoptar una actitud que indujera a todos a sentirse satisfechos con lo que habían realizado. Para dispersar a sus representantes, donde pudieran trabajar para otros, Dios permitió que fueran perseguidos. Ahuyentados de Jerusalén, los creyentes «iban por todas partes anunciando la palabra».<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Birkey, *The House Church [La iglesia de la casa]*, 60

<sup>289</sup> White, *Los hechos de los apóstoles*, 82-83

Dios siempre encuentra la manera de cumplir sus propósitos. Lo hizo en el pasado, y seguro que lo volverá a hacer en el futuro. La gran comisión está en perfecta correlación con el establecimiento de nuevas iglesias.

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## **CAPÍTULO 2**

### **LA MISIÓN DE LA IGLESIA Y LA REUNIÓN DE ADORACIÓN EN LÍNEA**

#### *Contexto Bíblico Sociológico*

¿Son los conceptos bíblicos de iglesia y misión lo suficientemente adaptables como para incluir la reunión de adoración en línea?

Una misión implica una tarea específica de la que se encarga una persona o un grupo. Jesús dijo: «Como me envió el Padre, así también yo os envío». San Juan 20: 21 «La misión es participación en la obra de Dios, no la obra de una iniciativa humana independiente. Y la misión comprende más que simplemente hacer algo, porque ser enviados es parte integral de la identidad de la iglesia, de su propio ser».<sup>290</sup>

La tarea del misionero es predicar el evangelio para hacer discípulos. El desafío es que, si bien el evangelio es eterno, el mundo cambia constantemente, por lo que se deben emplear continuamente nuevos métodos.

Elena G. de White enfatizó que debe realizarse un reavivamiento y una reforma bajo la ministración del Espíritu Santo. Reavivamiento y reforma son dos cosas diferentes. El reavivamiento significa una renovación de la vida espiritual, una vivificación de los poderes de la mente y del corazón, una resurrección de la muerte

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<sup>290</sup> Hank Voss, «*Priesthood of All Believers and the Missio Dei: A Canonical, Catholic, and Contextual Perspective*» (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016) xii

espiritual. La reforma significa una reorganización, un cambio en las ideas y las teorías, en los hábitos y las prácticas.<sup>291</sup>

Un cambio de ideas y teorías, hábitos y prácticas es un cambio de paradigma. Si la iglesia lo requirió en algún momento, es ahora.

White también enfatizó: «Se necesitan hombres que pidan a Dios sabiduría en oración y que, bajo la dirección de Dios, puedan poner nueva vida en los viejos métodos de trabajo y puedan inventar nuevos planes y nuevos métodos para despertar el interés de los miembros de iglesia y alcanzar a los hombres y mujeres del mundo».<sup>292</sup>

En este contexto, Rosario expone:

Coca-Cola perdió millones de dólares cuando, el 23 de abril de 1985, la empresa decidió cambiar la fórmula tradicional y lanzar la Nueva Coca, considerada uno de los peores errores de marketing de la historia. Los consumidores se opusieron y la receta original tuvo que regresar como la Coca-Cola Clásica. Por otro lado, el ícono comercial más reconocible del mundo, la Coca-Cola Contour Bottle, desde 1916, ha tenido todo tipo de versiones, tamaños y materiales, incluyendo la bolsa plástica de El Salvador o la botella elaborada con plantas distribuidas en Dinamarca, lo cual ha ayudado a la empresa a reinventarse y a ganar millones de dólares.<sup>293</sup>

No debemos negociar los fundamentos bíblicos de nuestra fe (la fórmula), pero podemos evaluar nuestra presentación (la cobertura) y hacerla más amigable.

Como ya se explicó, la iglesia, más que instituciones, edificios o programas, es la congregación de creyentes. Jesús fue claro: «porque donde están dos o tres congregados

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<sup>291</sup> Elena G. de White. *Servicio cristiano* (Miami, FL: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2012) 46.

<sup>292</sup> Elena G. de White. *El ministerio de la bondad* (Miami, FL: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2012) 85

<sup>293</sup> Manuel A. Rosario «Urban Evangelism: Biblical-Sociological Principles to Reach the Cities» (Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2014) 77



en mi nombre, allí estoy yo en medio de ellos». San Mateo 18: 20. Ignacio de Antioquía basó su principio eclesiológico en este mismo versículo cuando afirmó: «Dondequiera que esté Jesucristo, allí está la iglesia universal», y lo mismo enseñó Tertuliano.<sup>294</sup>

La dificultad es que este modelo congregacional siempre fue físico; sin embargo, después del COVID-19, de repente se volvió virtual. El mundo de las misiones ha cambiado; hay una nueva normalidad de la que forma parte la iglesia. El evangelismo tradicional se ha unido a la tecnología para dar paso a una estrategia evangelizadora completamente nueva. Hoy hablamos de discipulado y evangelización digital, discípulos digitales, misioneros digitales y mucho más. El ciberespacio es una parte integral del campo misionero.

Según Jamie Domm:

El discipulado digital es una forma de construir relaciones, satisfacer las necesidades de la comunidad y hacer avanzar el mensaje del evangelio en el espacio virtual o mediante una herramienta digital. Un discípulo digital es aquel que acepta y asiste en la difusión de las doctrinas de Cristo mediante el uso de herramientas digitales en el espacio digital. Un misionero digital es aquel que comparte su fe y creencias en el área digital con herramientas y tecnologías digitales.<sup>295</sup>

Este estudio promueve la idea de que la misión de la iglesia, lejos de ser rígida, es lo suficientemente plástica para encontrar a las personas donde están. También sostiene que bíblica e históricamente, el concepto de iglesia puede admitir la iglesia en línea.

### **Contextualización**

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<sup>294</sup> Miroslav, Volf, «*After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*» (Grand Rapids Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998) 136

<sup>295</sup> Domm Jamie «*Digital Discipleship & Evangelism: A practical guide for outreach, community service, growth, and evangelism for conferences, local churches, and personal ministries*». (Lincoln, NE: Advent Source, 2020) 4

Un aspecto crítico del papel de la iglesia en la misión de Dios es la contextualización. En el contexto teológico, implica un «descubrimiento cuidadoso de lo que significaba un texto en el mundo o ambiente en el que ha sido escrito, y lo que significa hoy en su forma final».<sup>296</sup> Sin embargo, me centraré en el aspecto misional.

Contextualizar la misión es tan vital como contextualizar la Biblia. «La contextualización ocurre en el punto de incorporación del evangelio y la cultura. Con miles de grupos etnolingüísticos, muchos con dialectos y segmentos subculturales, la necesidad de permitir que la fe cristiana se sienta en casa en cada uno es un testimonio de la necesidad de la contextualización».<sup>297</sup>

Nicholls declara:

Los comunicadores evangélicos a menudo han subestimado la importancia de los factores culturales en las comunicaciones. Algunos se han preocupado tanto por preservar la pureza del evangelio y su formulación doctrinal que han sido insensibles a los patrones de pensamiento cultural y al comportamiento de aquellos a quienes están proclamando el evangelio. Algunos han ignorado que términos como «Dios», «pecado», «encarnación», «salvación» y «cielo» transmiten en la mente de los oyentes imágenes diferentes a las del mensajero. Incluso aquellos oyentes que han tenido un contacto prolongado con misioneros cristianos o cristianos nacionales pueden continuar dando una interpretación totalmente diferente al evangelio. Por ejemplo, Mahatma Gandhi era un hindú que conocía desde hacía mucho tiempo a los misioneros cristianos y tenía un amplio conocimiento de las creencias y prácticas cristianas. Sin embargo, pudo escribir: «No he podido ver ninguna diferencia entre el Sermón del Monte y el Bhagavad Gita».<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Cyprian FR. Okoronkwo, «*Contextualization and Biblical Interpretation*», (Place of publication not identified: LULU COM, 2017) 9.

<sup>297</sup> Scott. A. Moreau, «*Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models*» (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2012) 19.

<sup>298</sup> Bruce J. Nicholls, «*Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture*» (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2003) 8.

A esta realidad hay que añadir el agravante de que vivimos en un mundo globalizado. No es necesario cruzar los mares para encontrar diferentes cosmovisiones, sino que conviven en varios puntos del planeta.

Después de Jesús, Pablo fue el maestro de la contextualización, pero el concilio de Jerusalén de Hechos 15 evidencia que toda la iglesia estaba llamada a contextualizar.

Al respecto, Andrew James Prime comenta:

A pesar de que la contextualización es un término misiológico relativamente nuevo, la actividad de contextualización no es reciente. Desde la época de Pentecostés, los cristianos han buscado presentar el mensaje del evangelio en términos que sean comprensibles y culturalmente relevantes para sus oyentes. En otras palabras, han buscado contextualizar el evangelio, definido anteriormente como el mensaje de las buenas nuevas de Dios centrado en el nacimiento, vida, muerte, resurrección y ascensión de Jesucristo y las implicaciones de ese mensaje para la vida diaria.<sup>299</sup>

La estrategia del apóstol Pablo era esta:

Me he hecho a los judíos como judío, para ganar a los judíos; a los que están sujetos a la Ley (aunque yo no esté sujeto a la Ley) como sujeto a la Ley, para ganar a los que están sujetos a la Ley; a los que están sin Ley, como si yo estuviera sin Ley (aunque yo no estoy sin ley de Dios, sino bajo la ley de Cristo), para ganar a los que están sin Ley. Me he hecho débil a los débiles, para ganar a los débiles; a todos me he hecho de todo, para que de todos modos salve a algunos. 1 Corintios 9: 20-22

Muchos ¡ignorantes! han intentado descontextualizar a Pablo. Contextualizar no se trata de diluir el evangelio. Uno de los casos más hermosos de contextualización es Hechos 17: 16-34, cuando el apóstol Pablo habla en el Areópago sobre el Dios desconocido. Un seguimiento cercano de la vida de Jesús y Pablo nos mostrará claramente qué es contextualizar y qué no lo es. David Bosch abogará por una

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<sup>299</sup> Prince, Andrew James. Contextualization of the Gospel: towards an Evangelical Approach in the Light of Scripture and the Church Fathers, 2015. p. 77.

contextualización compasiva y opuesta a una sobre contextualización. Esta última se define como «subordinada a los intereses y predilecciones ideológicas de un grupo separado».<sup>300</sup>

Sí, la iglesia tiene una tarea, pero debe cumplirse, considerando lo que Paul, Shaw y Tiénou llaman contextualización crítica, que permitió a la iglesia ir aclimatando el evangelio sin perder sus componentes esenciales.

Según los autores, este proceso implica 1) Análisis fenomenológico que significa estudiar fenomenológicamente la cultura local. «Antes de juzgar a las personas, es importante comprender sus creencias porque es en base a ellas que actúan». 2) Crítica ontológica que implica una comunicación significativa entre culturas, pruebas de la verdad y juicio moral del mal. 3) Criterios teológicos donde el pastor o el misionero dirige a la iglesia en un estudio de las Escrituras a las preguntas en cuestión y 4) «El evangelio no es simplemente información para ser comunicada. Es un mensaje al que la gente debe responder».<sup>301</sup>

Finalmente, quiero expresar que esta nueva contextualización debe considerar, el «nuevo continente» más significativo, el ciberespacio. Especialmente las nuevas generaciones son digitales (nativos digitales) y ven todo a través de la pantalla de un

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<sup>300</sup> Stan, Nussbaum, «Book Review: *Transformation through Compassionate Mission: David J. Bosch's Theology of Contextualization*». (International Bulletin of Missionary Research 28, no. 4 (2004): 184–184).

<sup>301</sup> Hiebert, Paul G., Robert Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou. *Understanding Folk Religion, a Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1999) 27.

teléfono celular. No existe la contextualización al margen del espacio digital. Además, tenemos que ser conscientes de las diferencias entre ellos y los inmigrantes digitales.

Los inmigrantes digitales aprendieron a enviar correos electrónicos y usar las redes sociales en una etapa avanzada de su vida. A diferencia de la mayoría de los inmigrantes digitales, los nativos digitales viven gran parte de su vida en línea, sin distinguir entre lo que está en la red y lo que está fuera de la red. En lugar de pensar en su identidad digital y su identidad en el espacio real como cosas separadas, simplemente tienen una identidad (con representaciones en dos, tres o más espacios diferentes). A ellos se une un conjunto de prácticas estándar, que incluyen la cantidad de tiempo que pasan usando tecnologías digitales, su tendencia a realizar múltiples tareas, su tendencia a expresarse y relacionarse entre sí de maneras mediadas por tecnologías digitales y su patrón de uso de las tecnologías. Para acceder y utilizar la información y crear nuevos conocimientos y formas de arte. «Para estos jóvenes, las nuevas tecnologías digitales (computadoras, teléfonos celulares, Sidekicks) son los principales mediadores de las conexiones de persona a persona». Ellos «han creado una red 24 horas al día, siete días a la semana que combina al ser humano con la tecnología en un grado que no habíamos experimentado antes».<sup>302</sup>

Las iglesias están llamadas a afrontar esta realidad o perderán relevancia. No es la primera vez que la iglesia contextualiza. Sin embargo, especialmente después de COVID-19, este es probablemente uno de los momentos más urgentes, repentinos e inciertos.

Uno de los principales problemas que enfrenta este desafío es generacional. Los jóvenes lideran el mundo científico, digital, empresarial y económico, pero no el mundo religioso. Es como pedirle a un extranjero que hable el idioma de un país como nativo. Podría hacerse, pero es inusual. «Los nativos digitales se sienten tan cómodos en los espacios en línea como en los fuera de línea. No piensan en sus vidas híbridas como algo

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<sup>302</sup> John G. Palfrey, and Urs Gasser. *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*. (New York: Basic Books, 2010) 20, 22-23

extraordinario. Los nativos digitales no han conocido nada más que una vida conectada, y con el mundo de los bits, de esta manera».<sup>303</sup> Para estos cambios, no hay mañana.

### **Missio Dei**

Un elemento que no debemos ignorar es el concepto de *Missio Dei*, que se refiere a la naturaleza misionera de Dios. Este conocido concepto misional enseña que, en última instancia, la misión pertenece a Dios. Es el misionero más importante de todos los tiempos. Él dio el primer viaje misionero en su peregrinaje tras Adán y Eva en el jardín del Edén. Fue quien preguntó: Adán, «¿Dónde estás?». Génesis 3: 9

El gran teólogo George F. Vicedom popularizó el término en su libro *Missio Dei* en 1958. Una parte central de su tesis afirma que la misión del hombre es una extensión de la misión de Dios. Se puede ver en el envío constante que se encuentra en los evangelios, como el envío de discípulos, San Mateo 10: 40y el envío de los setenta San Lucas 10: 1-12.

«En los primeros tiempos de la iglesia, Ireneo y Tertuliano aludieron el asunto de que Dios envió al Hijo. Posteriormente, Atanasio y los padres Capadocios desarrollan el concepto de que el Padre envió al Hijo, y el Espíritu Santo fue enviado por el Padre a través del Hijo. Pero originalmente este concepto fue utilizado por Agustín en las discusiones occidentales de la Trinidad sobre “el envío de Dios (del Hijo)” por el Padre (San Juan 3: 17; 5: 30; 11: 42; 17: 18)».<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> John G. Palfrey, and Urs Gasser. *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*, 23

<sup>304</sup> Vladimir Ubeivolc, «*Rethinking Missio Dei among Evangelical Churches in an Eastern European Orthodox Context*» (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Langham Monographs, 2016) 7

Vicedom amplifica la visión con el siguiente señalamiento: «Por un lado, *Missio Dei* significa que Dios ha hecho todo y hace todo y sin Él, toda misión es vana. Por otro lado, la *Missio Dei* no convierte al individuo en un cristiano superfluo ni lo deja sin responsabilidades; al contrario, recibe el mandato más grande del mundo».<sup>305</sup>

Este equilibrio es fundamental; Dios es dueño de la misión. Sin embargo, la iglesia es la administradora. Pablo escribió: «Por tanto, que los hombres nos consideren como servidores de Cristo y administradores de los misterios de Dios». 1 Corintios 4: 1. También declaró: «Y todo esto proviene de Dios, quien nos reconcilió consigo mismo por Cristo, y nos dio el ministerio de la reconciliación» 2 Corintios 5: 18.

Sin duda, «La misión es un aspecto permanente de la vida de la iglesia mientras esta, de una forma u otra, esté relacionada con el mundo». En palabras de Emilio Castro: «La misión es la realidad fundamental de nuestra vida cristiana [...]. Nuestra vida en este mundo es vida en misión».<sup>306</sup>

John L. Dybdahl articuló el mismo pensamiento en el contexto de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día:

La misión es fundamental para nuestra identidad; Jesús no creó la iglesia y luego le dio una misión como una de sus responsabilidades. El plan divino de salvación precede a la iglesia. La misión dio a luz a la iglesia, por lo que la misión es la madre de la iglesia. La misma esencia y naturaleza de la iglesia es misionera. Si la iglesia deja de ser misional, ha fallado en una de sus responsabilidades y deja de ser la iglesia, convirtiéndose solo en una organización social con orientación religiosa.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Thomas Schirrmacher. *Missio Dei*. (Germany: Wipf and Stocks Publishers, 2017) p. 7,8

<sup>306</sup> David Jacobus Bosch, «Witness to the World: the Christian Mission in Theological Perspective» (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006) 30, 31

<sup>307</sup> John Dybdahl. *Adventist Mission in 21th Century*. (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999).

Esta declaración me recuerda la afirmación de un amigo: «La misión tiene una iglesia. Hay una iglesia porque hay una misión y no al revés».

Las estructuras y estrategias tienen el único propósito de sustentar la visión por y para la que vivimos. Si ya no son aptos para el servicio, deben ajustarse o descartarse por el bien de la misión.<sup>308</sup> Leí en alguna parte que «la estructura sirve a la misión y no la misión a la estructura». Entonces, si la estructura obstaculiza la misión, se supone que debes cambiar el sistema, no la misión.

### **Misión en transformación según David Bosh**

La discusión sobre la misión ha sido monumental. Su teología, el papel de la iglesia y cómo cumplirla, han sido algunos de los aspectos más críticos gravitados en los círculos misionológicos y también en la conversación diaria de cristianos informados apasionados por la Gran Comisión.

En esta sección, exploro las perspectivas de uno de los más grandes misionólogos de todos los tiempos, David Jacobus Bosch (13 de diciembre de 1929 - 15 de abril de 1992), cuyos estudios representan un gran avance en el pensamiento sobre la misión.<sup>309</sup> Bosh fue un influyente misionólogo y teólogo sudafricano mejor conocido por su libro «*Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*» [Misión en

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<sup>308</sup> Anthony J. Gittins and Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Living Mission Interculturally: Faith, Culture, and the Renewal of the Praxis* (Liturgical Press, 2015).

<sup>309</sup> Brian Hearne «Book Review: *Transforming Mission: Paradigm shifts in Theology of Mission*» *The Furrow*, Vol. 44 (January), No. 1 (1993): 60, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27662353>. Accessed on August 2, 2020.



Transformación: cambios de paradigma en la teología de la misión] (1991) un trabajo significativo sobre la misión cristiana poscolonial.

Wilbert R. Shenk dijo sobre él:

La trágica muerte de David Bosch en un accidente automovilístico el 15 de abril de 1992, nos ha dejado a todos los que lo hemos conocido como amigo, colega, destacado teólogo misionero y estadista de la iglesia con un sentimiento de pérdida irreparable. Junto con su vasto conocimiento del campo de los estudios bíblicos, la teología, la historia de la iglesia y la misiología, David Bosch tenía la rara habilidad de destilar el conocimiento y la sabiduría para satisfacer las demandas del día.<sup>310</sup>

En su colosal libro de casi 600 páginas, descrito por otros, como tres libros en uno, Bosch adopta el término de Thomas Kuhn, «cambio de paradigma», del controvertido libro de Kuhn «Las estructuras de las revoluciones científicas» (1962). Ambos libros han tenido un tremendo impacto revolucionario en la vida secular y religiosa.

Bosch considera que la misión, más que algo estático, ha estado en constante movimiento, abrazando los tiempos, culturas y circunstancias de sus principales actores, los misioneros. «El argumento de Bosch a lo largo de las tres secciones principales del libro: (Modelos de misión del Nuevo Testamento; Paradigmas históricos de misión; y Hacia una misiología relevante) es que **no hay un meta paradigma para las misiones, es un paradigma en constante transformación**».<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> David Jacobus Bosch, «*Believing in the Future toward a Missiology of Western Culture*» (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, n.d.) 12.

<sup>311</sup> Bob Whitesel. «THEOLOGY & A Review of David Bosch's Transforming Mission» ChurchLeadership.wiki, 26 Jan. 2018, churchhealthwiki.wordpress.com/2018/01/26/theology-a-review-of-david-boschs-transforming-mission/.

Una vez más, Bosch se refiere a la misión como algo en movimiento y no simplemente estático. Incluso en el uso de la palabra misma. Este elemento es clave para nuestra disertación, por lo que decido exponer lo que Bosch presenta como su doctrina de la misión. Declara:

Desde la década de 1950, ha habido un notable aumento en el uso de la palabra «misión» entre los cristianos. Esto iba de la mano de una importante ampliación del concepto, al menos en ciertos círculos. Hasta la década de 1950, misión, incluso si no se usaba en un sentido unívoco, tenía un conjunto de significados relativamente circunscrito. Se refería a (a) el envío de misioneros a un territorio designado, (b) las actividades realizadas por tales ministros, (c) el área geográfica donde el predicador estaba activo, (d) la agencia que envió a los misioneros, (e) el mundo no cristiano o el campo misionero o (f) los centros desde donde los misioneros operaban la sede en el campo misionero.<sup>312</sup>

Justo en la primera sección de su libro, Bosch establece su teología de la misión, a la que llama «Los modelos de misión del Nuevo Testamento», pero antes de eso, el autor nos da una idea de lo que él llama misión en el Antiguo Testamento (pp. 16-20).

Bosch sostiene: «Se me podría preguntar si uno no debería comenzar con el Antiguo Testamento en busca de una comprensión de la misión. Esta es una pregunta legítima. Para la Iglesia cristiana y la Teología cristiana no hay Nuevo Testamento divorciado del Antiguo. Sin embargo, en el tema de la misión, nos encontramos con dificultades, particularmente si nos adherimos al entendimiento tradicional de la misión como el envío de predicadores a lugares distantes».<sup>313</sup>

Para él, ni siquiera el libro de Jonás se puede citar con este propósito. Es fundamental comenzar con Jesús; es esencial comprender qué fue la misión para Jesús y

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<sup>312</sup> David Jacobus Bosch. «*Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*» (Orbis Books, 2011) 1.

<sup>313</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 17.

para la iglesia primitiva. Jesús es particularmente crucial debido a su amplio sentido de misión. Como expresa Bosch específicamente: «Abarca tanto al pobre como al rico, tanto al oprimido como al opresor, tanto al impío como al devoto. Su misión es eliminar la alienación y derribar muros de hostilidad ».<sup>314</sup>

Bosch también señala como notable que Jesús prestara tanta atención a los gentiles, lo que se manifiesta en Sus encuentros, pero también en Sus parábolas. Destaca el impacto teológico del Reino de Dios (*Malkuth Yahweh* en hebreo), que aunque aparece en el Antiguo Testamento, pero es indudable que es fundamental para todo el ministerio de Jesús, por lo que también es fundamental para la comprensión de su misión.<sup>315</sup>

Por otro lado, «el Reino de Dios» (βασιλεία θεοῦ) también es indudablemente central para todo el ministerio de Jesús. Asimismo, es fundamental para la comprensión de su misión. Incluso se puede decir que, para Jesús, el Reino de Dios es el punto de partida y el contexto de la misión». Más adelante afirmará los fracasos de la iglesia primitiva en proclamar este Reino, dejando de ser movimiento y convirtiéndose en institución,<sup>316</sup> aun cuando reconoce que era inevitable.<sup>317</sup>

Para Bosch, el Reino es fundamental, pero no quiere quedarse ahí. El Nuevo Testamento es el libro misionero <sup>318</sup> y Mateo, Lucas y Pablo son claves para comprender el significado real de lo que fue la misión para la Iglesia Primitiva.

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<sup>314</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 28.

<sup>315</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 31.

<sup>316</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 50.

<sup>317</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 52.

<sup>318</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 54.

Whitesel comentando Bosch afirma:

Dentro del mismo Nuevo Testamento, encontramos diferentes modelos de misión; el énfasis de Mateo recae en la formación de discípulos, el de Lucas en la solidaridad con los pobres y el de Pablo tiene una dimensión escatológica definida. La misión está siendo «transformada» y redefinida por los autores bíblicos para y dentro de los diferentes contextos. La naturaleza contextual de definir la misión es una premisa importante para Bosch. Un argumento básico de este libro ha sido que, desde el principio, el mensaje misionero de la iglesia cristiana se encarnó en la vida y el mundo de quienes lo habían abrazado.<sup>319</sup>

Bosch explica que durante los últimos dos siglos, los misioneros apelaron con razón a la Gran Comisión (hacer discípulos a todas las naciones). Sin embargo, se olvidaron de que no podía entenderse adecuadamente aislada de todo el evangelio de Mateo.<sup>320</sup>

También afirma que Lucas es crucial como escritor del libro de Lucas, pero también como escritor del libro de los Hechos. No hay duda hoy entre los eruditos de que existe una continuación entre la misión de Jesús en Lucas y la misión de la iglesia primitiva en Hechos.

En el caso de Pablo, que es, después de Jesús, es el misionero fundamental del primer siglo, encontramos la misión a la metrópoli.<sup>321</sup> Al respecto, Bosch declara: «El sentido de preocupación de Pablo por los gentiles del Imperio Romano se manifiesta en una profunda conciencia de que se debe proclamar el evangelio. Es un cargo que se le ha impuesto: “¡Ay de mí si no anunciara el evangelio!”». 1 Corintios 9: 16

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<sup>319</sup> Bob Whitesel. «THEOLOGY & A Review of David Bosch's Transforming Mission». ChurchLeadership.wiki, 26 Jan. 2018, churchhealthwiki.wordpress.com/2018/01/26/theology-a-review-of-david-boschs-transforming-mission/.

<sup>320</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 55.

<sup>321</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 129.

Bosch comenta cómo, hasta el siglo dieciséis, el concepto de misión estaba indisolublemente ligado al tema de la Trinidad, es decir, al envío del Hijo por el Padre y al envío del Espíritu por el Hijo. Asimila la misión a una cadena que tiene su inicio en Dios mismo. En este sentido, un texto clave es San Juan 20: 21, que dice: «Entonces Jesús les dijo otra vez: ¡Paz a vosotros! Como me envió el Padre, así también yo os envío».

Este texto de Juan es notable ya que la palabra misión comunica la idea de enviar, verbo latino *mittere*. Misión significa por definición etimológica, la acción y efecto de enviar, y transmisión es la acción de enviar de un lugar a otro. La comisión es la acción de enviar un grupo de personas.

Para Bosch, el Nuevo Testamento es el documento misionero más crucial. Sostiene que mientras que para Mateo, la misión es hacer discípulos, para Lucas-Hechos, es el anuncio del perdón y la solidaridad hacia los pobres. Añade que la misión en Lucas-Hechos se condensa en el anuncio del binomio arrepentimiento-perdón de pecados. San Lucas 24: 47, Hechos 2: 38, Hechos 3: 19, Hechos 17: 30.

Sin embargo, la idea que transmite el autor es que la misión ha sufrido cambios vitales a lo largo de la historia. Habla de los modelos misioneros de la iglesia oriental y occidental. Analiza el paradigma misionero de la reforma protestante, así como el posmoderno, el ecuménico y las múltiples formas contemporáneas de cumplir la misión. **Concluye que la misión en términos de sustancia es una, pero en la forma, históricamente ha sido multiforme.**

Bosch también tiene sus detractores; ha sido criticado por el amplio alcance de su teoría de la misión. Se inclina a pensar que la misión incluye mucho más que la

evangelización y la salvación solamente. Mi punto no es respaldar su paradigma completo, sino llamar la atención sobre la naturaleza dinámica de la misión.

### **Misión y reino según Arthur F. Glasser**

También quiero invitar a un segundo exponente, Arthur F. Glasser, y a sus aliados, a compartir la historia de la misión de Dios en la Biblia a través de su clásico *Anunciando el Reino*. Para ellos, si la iglesia desea comprender lo que ellos llaman la revelación bíblica de Dios sobre la misión, será necesario que la iglesia escuche los testigos del Antiguo y Nuevo Testamento.<sup>322</sup>

Este aspecto es emocionante ya que incluso cuando los autores están centrados en el Reino en lo que se refiere a la misión, no comienzan su disertación en el Nuevo Testamento como lo hace Bosch; en cambio, comienzan desde el principio. Estos autores defienden la tesis de que toda la Biblia es un libro misionero y que la historia de la humanidad es la historia de la misión.

Al respecto, George Eldon Ladd comenta:

«La idea bíblica del Reino de Dios está profundamente arraigada en el Antiguo Testamento y se basa en la confianza de que hay un Dios vivo eterno que se ha revelado a los hombres y que tiene un propósito para la raza humana que él ha elegido para lograr a través de Israel. La esperanza bíblica es, por tanto, una esperanza religiosa; es un elemento esencial en la voluntad revelada y la obra redentora del Dios vivo».<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Glasser, Arthur F., et al. *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible*. (Claretian Publications, 2005).

<sup>323</sup> George Eldon Ladd «*The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God*» (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011) 16

La teología de la misión de Glasser y sus aliados se desarrolla a lo largo de la historia. Es por eso que él y sus colegas comienzan con lo que ellos llaman la misión de Dios al principio, donde representan toda la Biblia como un libro misionero y entrelazan la historia de la humanidad con la misión. La misión de Dios a través de Israel y la misión de Dios a las naciones. También explica cómo los reyes de Israel desafiaron el gobierno de Dios y, como resultado, fueron enviados al exilio entre las naciones.<sup>324</sup>

Los autores declaran: «La elección de Abraham y el pacto de Dios con él representan la primera expresión de la preocupación redentora de Dios por todas las naciones. Como resultado, Abraham debe ser considerado el pionero de la misión».<sup>325</sup>

Según estos autores, después de Abraham, Dios continuó a través de sus descendientes y finalmente Israel de quien vino el Mesías. Tanto Bosch como Glasser están de acuerdo en que sin lugar a dudas, la misión va a un nuevo nivel en el Nuevo Testamento.

Los grandes autores de *Anunciando el Reino* finalmente llegan a la inauguración de Jesús de su Reino, lo que ven como una continuación de ese Reino eterno de Dios. Según estos eruditos, toda la plataforma misiológica del evangelio se basa en el anuncio del Reino.

Jesús no solo inaugura el Reino, sino que se predijo también que su ministerio demostraría el Reino. Jesús habló del Reino en su fase de gracia (Primera Venida) y su fase de gloria (Segunda Venida). Dijo que el Reino estaba aquí entre nosotros, San Lucas

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<sup>324</sup> Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 90-105

<sup>325</sup> Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 57

17: 21 y cerca (San Mateo 25: 31). También llamó a las parábolas los misterios del reino. ( la del Sembrador). En otras palabras. Un objetivo central de la misión de Jesús fue anunciar las buenas nuevas del Reino de Dios. San Lucas 4: 43

Maxwell sostiene:

El reino de los cielos es un tema frecuente en las parábolas de Jesús. Es el reino sobre el cual Cristo mismo es el indiscutible Rey de reyes y Señor de señores. Es el dominio en el que su señorío es plenamente operativo incluso ahora. En otras palabras, todos los que verdaderamente pertenecen al reino de los cielos se han rendido formalmente al señorío de Cristo. Por tanto, entrar en el reino es entrar en la vida eterna. En resumen, el reino es sinónimo de la esfera de la salvación, ese reino eterno donde los redimidos tienen su verdadera ciudadanía (Filipenses 3: 20).<sup>326</sup>

Creo que Maxwell tiene razón. El centro del reino es el rey. Al asociarse con el reino, la misión de la iglesia se eleva a una dimensión aún más significativa. Una mentalidad de reino es una mentalidad de misión. Al final, la misión y el reino apuntan en la misma dirección, el rey.

### **La reunión de adoración en línea**

La experiencia de adoración en línea se ha convertido en la norma durante la era del COVID-19. Parecería que todo el conjunto de patrones de adoración se volviera obsoleto a la vez. Douglas Estes predijo esta transición hace más de una década, con su clásico *SimChurch*: Ser la iglesia en el mundo virtual, donde en el 2009 dijo:

Hoy ha comenzado una nueva comunidad del pueblo de Dios. No la encontraremos en las calles. Muchos de nosotros ni siquiera la reconoceremos como una iglesia. Todos conocemos iglesias: algunas son tradicionales, algunas son modernas, algunas son mega, algunas son emergentes. A pesar de todas sus diferencias aparentes, cada una de estas iglesias es la misma: variaciones de la iglesia física en la era moderna [...] Está surgiendo una nueva reunión de creyentes, una iglesia no en el mundo real de ladrillos y cemento, sino en el

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<sup>326</sup> George MacArthur «*Parables*» (NA, Nelson Books, 2015) 119



mundo virtual de direcciones IP y experiencias compartidas. Este tipo de iglesia es diferente a cualquier iglesia que el mundo haya visto. Tiene el poder de derribar las barreras sociales, unir a los creyentes de todo el mundo y construir el reino de Dios con una pizca de financiamiento. Es un tipo de iglesia completamente diferente a cualquiera que el mundo haya visto.<sup>327</sup>

Para Estes, una iglesia es una asamblea localizada del pueblo de Dios que habita en una comunidad significativa con la tarea de construir el reino. Con este concepto en mente, define la iglesia en línea como una asamblea virtualmente localizada del pueblo de Dios que habita en una comunidad significativa con la tarea de construir el reino.

La iglesia en línea es una iglesia, de la misma manera que las iglesias en casa y las megas iglesias también son iglesias. Lo que es diferente es la forma en que se ensamblan. Podríamos decir lo mismo de otras formas de iglesias; por ejemplo, una iglesia en casa sería una asamblea localizada en hogares del pueblo de Dios. Si estoy en un edificio con usted, estoy presente, mientras que si me encuentro con usted a través de Zoom, entonces estoy telepresente.<sup>328</sup>

Nick Small, un experto en la red comenta: «Históricamente, la tradición y el boca a boca han sido la forma en que las iglesias han expandido su alcance. Hoy en día, las tecnologías modernas han creado nuevas opciones para llevar los servicios religiosos a quienes los necesitan y no pueden asistir a un servicio en persona. Los servicios de

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<sup>327</sup> Douglas, Estes «*SimChurch: Being the Church in the Virtual World*» (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009) 17

<sup>328</sup> Douglas Estes «*The One Thing That Makes or Breaks Online Church*». The Center for Pastor Theologians. The Center for Pastor Theologians, March 25, 2020. Last modified March 25, 2020. Consultado el 9 de Agosto de 2020. <https://www.pastortheologians.com/articles/2020/3/25/the-thing-about-online-church>.

transmisión en vivo han aumentado el potencial de la iglesia y de otros servicios religiosos». <sup>329</sup>

Small, también explica que cuando uno transmite un servicio de la iglesia, puede:

- Llegar a los miembros durante pandemias de emergencia como COVID-19.
- Permitir a los miembros que están enfermos, lesionados, o de avanzada edad como para asistir al templo, o que tienen una discapacidad que les dificulta viajar, vean su culto.
- Las transmisiones en vivo ayudan a los miembros que viajan y desean continuar participando en su comunidad de fe.
- Extender su alcance más allá de su comunidad local y ayudar a las personas a conectarse.
- Crear una transmisión en vivo de su sermón o un evento privado para los miembros de su congregación que no pueden asistir.
- Grabar sus transmisiones en vivo y hacer que estén disponibles como video por encargo. Esta también es una excelente manera de mantener la experiencia de cada evento para siempre. Permite a las personas que se perdieron el evento en vivo verlo más tarde en su propio tiempo porque queda grabado.

Karla Hovde, otra experta en el tema, citando al entrenador de adoración creativa Jason Moore enfatiza: «Piense en hacer que la adoración en línea sea más corta, pero más amplia». En lugar de crear una experiencia larga y elaborada, piense en tener un servicio más condensado e invite a las personas a un tiempo de oración en línea el lunes, a una reunión de un grupo de jóvenes a través de Zoom el martes, o alguna otra experiencia entre semana. <sup>330</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Nick Small, «7 Live Streaming Solutions for Your Church - 2020 Update». Dacast. Last modified June 23, 2020. Consultado el 7 de Agosto de 2020. <https://www.dacast.com/blog/7-best-live-streaming-services-for-your-church/>.

<sup>330</sup> Dakotas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, Karla Hovde. «10 Tips to Make Online Worship Engaging». Dakotas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Consulta 9 agosto 2020. <https://www.dakotasumc.org/news/10-tips-to-make-online-worship-engaging>.

Uno de los mayores errores que puede cometer un líder de alabanza es extrapolar el servicio regular completo al contexto virtual. Por otro lado, cuando se hace bien, las posibilidades de hacer crecer el reino son ilimitadas.

En este mismo artículo, Karla ofrece ocho consejos para hacer que el servicio sea atractivo:

- **Adáptese.** Encuentre formas de hacer que el servicio sea más interactivo y participativo.
- **Acérquese a la cámara.** Evite las tomas amplias del santuario. Asegúrese de que el orador esté bien iluminado y cerca de la cámara y el micrófono.
- **Enganche a los espectadores desde el principio.** Bríndeles un retorno de la inversión (RDI) de inmediato. Si inicia su servicio de transmisión en vivo con una bienvenida y anuncios regulares, las personas se desplazarán y encontrarán otra transmisión para ver.
- **Piense más allá de la transmisión en vivo.** Las personas que se sienten más aisladas durante este virus (COVID-19 ) suelen ser las que tienen más desafíos con la tecnología.
- **Sueñe en grande.** Este es el momento de probar algo nuevo en la adoración.
- **Conéctese con los niños.** Grabe un video de alguien que cuente una historia bíblica para niños cada semana.
- **Actualice su sitio web.** Su sitio web es la nueva puerta de entrada de su iglesia.

- **Esté preparado para los invitados.** Cada semana asuma que alguien está participando en su adoración en línea por primera vez. Durante la apertura, siempre dé la bienvenida a los invitados.

Aprovechemos esta gran oportunidad que tenemos con el encuentro en línea.

Sabemos que la iglesia tiene una historia y el hábito de resistir los cambios tecnológicos.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Pam, Smith, «Online Mission and Ministry: A Theological and Practical Guide» (London: SPCK, 2015)

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### **CAPÍTULO 3**

## **ESPIRITUALIDAD DE LAS GENERACIONES VIVAS Y ASISTENCIA A LA IGLESIA**

### *Contexto sociológico*

¿Cómo definen las distintas generaciones su espiritualidad y compromiso de asistencia a la iglesia?

Para evaluar las tendencias económicas, políticas, religiosas y sociales a lo largo del tiempo, los demógrafos comparan grupos de personas en función de sus años de nacimiento. «Aquí hay un vistazo a seis generaciones de estadounidenses en el siglo XX: la Generación Grandiosa (o generación GI, la generación de la Segunda Guerra Mundial), la Generación Silente o Silenciosa, los *Baby Boomers* (los nacidos durante la explosión de natalidad de la posguerra), la Generación X, los *Milenials* y la Generación Z. A veces hay variaciones en el año que comienza o termina una generación, según la fuente».<sup>332</sup>

Es cierto que el término «generación» se ha utilizado con ambigüedad, e incluso existe oposición al concepto mismo. Por ejemplo, Vern L. Bengtson y W. Andrew Achenbaum argumentan que deberíamos usar el término población base o grupo de edad para referirnos a aquellos que han nacido aproximadamente en la misma época y que, por lo tanto, experimentan eventos ambientales o históricos específicos en el curso de sus

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<sup>332</sup> «American Generation Fast Facts». CNN. Cable News Network, 17 de agosto de 2019. Modificado por última vez el 17 de agosto de 2019. Consulta 11 agosto 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/06/us/baby-boomer-generation-fast-facts/index.html>.



vidas. Para ellos, el término generación solo debería reflejar el orden y clasificación de los descendientes dentro de las familias.<sup>333</sup>

Según Michael Dimock, experto del *Pew Research Center* (El Centro de Investigaciones Pew), los puntos de corte generacionales no son una ciencia exacta. Deben verse como herramientas. Sin embargo, sus límites no son irracionales.

Su extensión a menudo toma en cuenta las generaciones, pero no existe una fórmula acordada sobre cuánto tiempo debería ser ese período. Dieciséis años (1981 a 1996), nuestra definición acordada para los *Milenials* es equivalente en rango de edad a la generación anterior, la Generación X (nacidos entre 1965 y 1980). Según esta definición, ambas son más breves que los *Baby Boomers* (19 años), la única generación designada oficialmente por la Oficina del Censo de los EE. UU., basado en el famoso aumento de nacimientos posteriores a la Segunda Guerra Mundial en 1946 y una disminución significativa en las tasas de natalidad después de 1964.<sup>334</sup>

La Biblia cuenta historias que muestran lo rápido que pueden ocurrir cambios generacionales radicales. Jueces 2: 10-11 declara: «Y murió también toda aquella generación, por lo que la generación que se levantó después no conocía a Jehová ni la obra que él había hecho por Israel. Después, los hijos de Israel hicieron lo malo ante los ojos de Jehová y sirvieron a los baales». El concepto de generaciones en esos días era diferente al de hoy. Sin embargo, da una idea de los cambios que pueden ocurrir en unos pocos años.

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<sup>333</sup> Bengtson Vern L., Achenbaum W. Andrew, «*The Changing Contract across Generations*» (New York: A. de Gruyter, 1993) 10.

<sup>334</sup> Dimock, Michael. «Defining Generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins». *Pew Research Center*. Pew Research Center, 28 de julio de 2020. Modificado por última vez 28 julio 2020. Consulta 19 agosto 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>.

Vern L. Bengtson, autor del libro *Families, and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations* [Familias y fe: cómo la religión se transmite a través de generaciones] abunda:

Tomamos en cuenta la pregunta de si los individuos nacidos dentro de un período común de la historia comparten percepciones comunes de la religión, la espiritualidad y Dios. Nos preguntamos si las percepciones de una generación difieren de las que nacieron antes o después, y de qué manera. Esto es especialmente importante para un estudio multigeneracional de la religión, ya que la religión en Estados Unidos ha cambiado significativamente junto con los importantes eventos históricos y las transformaciones sociales durante el siglo pasado.<sup>335</sup>

Los sociólogos de las religiones explican que ha habido un cambio sistemático en la forma en que diferentes generaciones abrazan la espiritualidad, especialmente en la asistencia a la iglesia, las fiestas y tradiciones religiosas. Al respecto, *Pew Research* declara: «Según encuestas recientes, la Generación Z es la generación menos religiosa. Aproximadamente un tercio no tiene religión, casi la misma proporción que los *millenials*, en comparación con el 23 por ciento, 17 por ciento y 11 por ciento de la Generación X, los *Baby Boomers* y la Generación Silente».<sup>336</sup>

Este estudio obversa que todas las generaciones están disminuyendo en la asistencia a la iglesia y todas podrían beneficiarse de la reunión de adoración en línea. Además, especialmente las generaciones más jóvenes podrían sentirse atraídas por un modelo renovado de plantación de micro-iglesias basado en la tecnología.

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<sup>335</sup> Bengtson, Vern L. Bengtson, «*Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down Across Generations*» (Oxford University Press, 2013) 79, 80.

<sup>336</sup> Michael Lipka, «Millennials increasingly are driving the growth of nones» Pew Research Center, 12 de Mayo de 2015, consulta 10 junio 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/12/millennials-increasingly-are-driving-growth-of-nones/>.

## La generación grandiosa (GI)

Los GI (soldados, por su acrónimo en inglés) es el grupo nacido en 1924 o antes.

La generación de John F. Kennedy, Walt Disney, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter George H. W. Bush y muchos otros.

En su clásico, *The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069* [La Historia del futuro de Estados Unidos de 1584 al 2069], Williams Strauss y Neil Hove comentan sobre la Generación Grandiosa:

La imparable energía de los soldados (*G.I.s*) está bien caracterizada en su personaje de tira cómica más perdurable: *Superman*. Concebido por dos caricaturistas treintañeros, *Superman* se hizo famoso justo antes de que sus compañeros (*G.I.s*) entraran en la Segunda Guerra Mundial y ellos mismos comenzaron a mostrar «poderes y habilidades más allá de los de los hombres mortales». Todo acerca de la historia de *Superman* se lee como una parábola de los soldados en movimiento: el niño especial, el corrupto Lex Luthor (perdido), la virilidad como una roca y la suavidad como la fórmica, el éxito invariable de la fuerza de *Superman* utilizada para el bien de la comunidad [...] Ninguna otra generación de este siglo se ha sentido (o ha sido) tan prometeica, tan divina en su poder colectivo de transformar el mundo. Ninguna ha sido tan hábil en su aptitud para la ciencia y la ingeniería. También se convirtieron en los mejores economistas, ingenieros sociales y planificadores comunitarios de la historia del país, produciendo lo que Seymour Martin Lipset en 1960 denominó «el cambio de la ideología a la sociología».<sup>337</sup>

Es justo decir que muchos académicos destacados como Paul Fussell, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. y Joseph J. Ellis han desafiado la noción de la Generación Grandiosa, popularizada en 1998 por Tom Brokaw. Para ellos, «la mejor forma de honrar a esta generación no es falsificarla sino humanizarla. La única forma en que se puede hacer es

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<sup>337</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe «*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*» (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 263-264.

seguir la verdad a donde conduzca e incluir lo vergonzoso y lo noble».<sup>338</sup> Sin embargo, reconocen que se enfrentan con la irresistible tentación de crear un mito agradable.

Cualesquiera que sean los argumentos de ambos lados, estos son los hechos:

Ellos (los *G.I.s*) crecieron en la Gran Depresión. Condujeron algunos de los primeros automóviles en las primeras carreteras pavimentadas de Estados Unidos. Ellos [...] construyeron la infraestructura de nuestra nación. Colocaron cables en todo nuestro país y llevaron electricidad y teléfonos a los hogares de todo los Estados Unidos. Compraron radios e inventaron la primera televisión. Aterrizaron en las playas de Normandía, izaron la bandera en la cima del monte Suribachi en Iwo Jima y defendieron nuestra libertad en la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Fueron los primeros en entrar al espacio y optaron por ir a la luna. Hoy, su generación está desapareciendo de la tierra. Alguna vez sumaron más de 12 millones, pero solo 1.2 millones sobreviven. Cada día mueren un total de mil miembros de la generación de la Segunda Guerra Mundial.<sup>339</sup>

En términos de espiritualidad y afiliación religiosa, un estudio del *Pew Research Center* en Septiembre de 2018 destacó la composición religiosa de los adultos en la Generación Grandiosa. El estudio mostró que el 86% se definían a sí mismos como cristianos, 6% como de credos no cristianos y el 8% como no afiliados («no religiosos»). El estudio también especificó que el 66% de ellos cree en Dios (absolutamente seguro), 15% cree en Dios (bastante seguro) y 4% cree en Dios (no demasiado/nada seguro). Solo el 7% dijo que no cree en Dios, mientras que el 3% dijo que no sabía.

Cuando se les preguntó sobre la importancia de las religiones en sus vidas, el 72% dijo que era muy importante, 15% algo importante, 7% no demasiado importante, 6% no importante y el 1% no sabía. También es notable que a pesar de su edad, el 51%

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<sup>338</sup> Kenneth D. Rose «*Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II*». (New York: Routledge, 2012) 3.

<sup>339</sup> Bill Tinsley, Religion columnist. «Religion: Remembering the 'Greatest Generation'». WacoTrib.com. Modificado por última vez el 24 de mayo de 2014. Consulta 12 agosto 2020. [https://wacotrib.com/news/local/religion-remembering-the-greatest-generation/article\\_09e9ad41-023d-5fd6-9e4a-0bc46a4e3a64.html](https://wacotrib.com/news/local/religion-remembering-the-greatest-generation/article_09e9ad41-023d-5fd6-9e4a-0bc46a4e3a64.html).

asistía a los cultos religiosos al menos una vez a la semana, 23% una o dos veces al mes, o algunas veces al año, 25% rara vez o nunca, y el 1% no sabía. El 69% de esta cohorte ora a diario, 70% siente paz espiritual, 45% lee la Biblia al menos una vez a la semana, 69% cree en el cielo y el 31% considera que existen estándares específicos para lo que está bien o mal, mientras que el 62% considera que el bien o el mal depende de la situación.<sup>340</sup>

### **La generación silenciosa**

La Generación Silenciosa incluye a todos los nacidos después del 31 de diciembre de 1927 y antes del 1 de enero de 1946, antes y durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, en una época de inseguridad económica. Fueron etiquetados como Silenciosos en 1951 por un artículo de la revista *Time* porque eran mucho más cautelosos que sus padres. El mismo decía: «En comparación con la “Juventud Flamígera” de sus padres y madres, la generación más joven de hoy es una llama pequeña y apacible».<sup>341</sup>

Conocidos comúnmente como tradicionalistas, los miembros de esta generación siguen siendo amados y respetados. Su esfuerzo por evitar el desperdicio es significativamente diferente del gasto lujoso y llamativo de la era moderna. «Las características de la generación silenciosa incluyen la disciplina, la defensa de los valores, la gratitud y el aprecio por las «simplicidades» de la vida [...] Muchos tuvieron que

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<sup>340</sup> «Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics». Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Modificado por última vez 19 septiembre 2018. Consulta 12 agosto 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/greatest/>.

<sup>341</sup> «American Generation Fast Facts». CNN. Cable News Network, 17 de agosto de 2019. Modificado por última vez el 17 de agosto de 2019. Consulta 12 agosto 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/06/us/baby-boomer-generation-fast-facts/index.html>.

buscar empleo y emprender proyectos desafiantes para experimentar alivio económico y libertad. »<sup>342</sup>

Abramson amplifica:

La población que existió durante este período se consideró oprimida debido a las limitaciones y los temores de la guerra. Los hechos de la generación silenciosa apuntan a dificultades significativas debido al Comunismo, la Gran Depresión y la falta de placeres sociales como los conocemos. Este período incluyó un gran desempleo y las dificultades resultantes de la incapacidad de poner comida en la mesa y mantener un techo sobre su cabeza... Se distinguen por una conexión con una identidad de grupo en lugar de una individual.<sup>343</sup>

Miembros de esta generación son el presidente número 46 de los Estados Unidos, Joe Biden, el senador Bernie Sanders y Michael Bloomberg, ex alcalde de la ciudad de Nueva York. Es una cohorte pequeña. Según el *Pew Research Center*, esta generación contaba con solo 30 millones en 2015. En ese momento, había 75 millones de *baby boomers* (1946-1964), 66 millones de Generación Xers (1965-1976), 75 millones de *millenials* (1977 a 1995) y 69 millones en la Generación Z (1996 hasta ahora y en continuo aumento).<sup>344</sup>

Strauss and Neil afirman:

Están interesados en el sistema más que en la empresa individual». Solo el 2 por ciento deseaba trabajar por cuenta propia. La mayoría del resto quería trabajar en grandes corporaciones que ofrecieran seguridad laboral. «Nunca la juventud

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<sup>342</sup> Abramson, Alexis, and Name \*. «The Silent Generation Characteristics and Facts You Need to Know». Dr. Alexis Abramson - Expert Advice for Seniors, Baby Boomers, Caregivers, 50+ Market. Modificado por última vez 13 agosto 2018. Consulta 12 agosto 2020. <https://www.alexisabramson.com/the-silent-generation-characteristics-and-facts-you-need-to-know/>.

<sup>343</sup> Abramson, The Silent Generation Characteristics and Facts You Need to Know.

<sup>344</sup> Mathews, Jay. «Perspective | The Silent Generation Deserves to Be Heard in Our Classrooms». The Washington Post. WP Company, 18 de enero de 2020. Modificado por última vez el 18 de enero de 2020. Consulta 12 agosto 2020. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/the-silent-generation-deserves-to-be-heard-in-our-classrooms/2020/01/16/1ecf56cc-38a7-11ea-bb7b-265f4554af6d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/the-silent-generation-deserves-to-be-heard-in-our-classrooms/2020/01/16/1ecf56cc-38a7-11ea-bb7b-265f4554af6d_story.html).

estadounidense había sido tan retraída, cautelosa, carente de imaginación, indiferente, poco aventurera y silenciosa», Más tarde, el historiador *G.I. William Manchester* «bromeó»: La GENERACIÓN SILENCIOSA era un nombre que a estos jóvenes no les gustaba, pero sabían que encajaba. «No teníamos líderes, ningún programa, ningún sentido de nuestro propio poder y ninguna cultura exclusivamente nuestra», admitió Frank Conroy. «Nuestra ropa, nuestros modales y nuestro estilo de vida no eran originales, sino versiones reducidas de lo que veíamos en los adultos.<sup>345</sup>

En términos de espiritualidad y afiliación religiosa, el estudio del *Pew Research Center* en septiembre de 2018 también subrayó la composición religiosa de los adultos en la Generación Silenciosa. El estudio mostró que el 85% se definían a sí mismos como cristianos, 4% como de credos no cristianos y el 11% como no afiliados («no religiosos»). El estudio también especificó que el 71% de ellos cree en Dios (absolutamente seguro), 16% cree en Dios (bastante seguro) y el 4% cree en Dios (no demasiado/nada seguro). Solo el 6% dijo que no cree en Dios, mientras que el 2% especificó que no sabía.

Cuando se les preguntó sobre la importancia de la religión en sus vidas, el 67% dijo que era muy importante, 18% algo importante, 6% no demasiado importante, 7% no importante y el 1% no sabía. El 51% asistía a cultos religiosos al menos una vez a la semana, 23% una o dos veces al mes, o algunas veces al año, 24% rara vez o nunca y el 1% no sabía. El 67% de esta cohorte ora a diario, 66% siente paz espiritual, 44% lee la Biblia al menos una vez a la semana, 75% cree en el cielo y el 37% considera que

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<sup>345</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe «*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*» (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 263-264

existen estándares específicos para lo que está bien o mal, mientras que el 59% considera que el bien o el mal depende de la situación.<sup>346</sup>

### **Los Baby Boomers**

Los *baby boomers* nacieron entre 1944 y 1964. Rostros famosos son Bill Clinton, George Bush, Elton John, Oprah Winfrey, Madonna, George Clooney y Barack Obama. Actualmente tienen entre 57 y 77 años y representaban 76 millones en los EE.UU. al 2019. «Hubo muchos, muchos bebés recién nacidos a mediados de los cuarenta. La mayoría fueron planeados o permitidos, pero también hubo muchas sorpresas y embarazos no deseados. El país estaba triunfante y los adultos jóvenes tenían mucha tensión reprimida que liberar en un momento en que los métodos anticonceptivos eran limitados y poco fiables».<sup>347</sup>

En 1946, la revista *Fortune* declaró el comienzo del *Gran Boom* (auge) estadounidense, un «auge no solo en la fertilidad, sino también en la economía, la educación, la vivienda y la ciencia. Los sólidos logros y el optimismo de esa época dejaron una huella duradera en los niños».<sup>348</sup>

Esta gran generación creció en las desenfundadas décadas de los sesenta y setenta y es responsable de una profunda transformación cultural en el país. «Los *baby boomers*

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<sup>346</sup> «Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics». Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Modificado por última vez 19 septiembre 2018. Consulta 13 agosto 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/silent/>.

<sup>347</sup> Feeney, Paul. «Baby Boomer Generation - a Lifetime of Memories» (The History Press Ltd, 2015) 21-22

<sup>348</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe «*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*» (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 302



han sido durante mucho tiempo el foco del debate sobre los valores morales y el tono que establecieron para este país, controversiales desde el momento en que se rebelaron hasta la crisis más reciente de la presidencia de Clinton». <sup>349</sup> «Tú lo construyes, madre, nosotros lo derribaremos», fue el lema de Jacob Brackman para su *BOOM GENERATION*, que luego desencadenó la agitación juvenil más furiosa y violenta de Estados Unidos del siglo XX». <sup>350</sup>

Las otras dos variables de la época fueron la revolución sexual y la mentalidad posmoderna. Strauss y Neil Howe afirman:

Dentro del auge, la «revolución sexual» fue más un movimiento de mujeres que de hombres. Comparando la década de 1970 con la de 1950, una encuesta mostró que los hombres de la posguerra tuvieron solo un aumento del 3 por ciento en la actividad sexual sobre lo que hicieron los Silenciosos a su misma edad. De manera similar, la proporción de jóvenes varones que experimentaron relaciones sexuales prematrimoniales aumentó solo ligeramente desde la generación Silenciosa a los *Boomer*. Por el contrario, las mujeres *Boomer* duplicaron la tasa de relaciones sexuales prematrimoniales sobre las silenciosas (del 41 por ciento al 81 por ciento) y triplicaron su propensión relativa a cometer adulterio (de una cuarta parte a las tres cuartas partes de la tasa de los hombres). <sup>351</sup>

En cuanto a la secularización, el cambio drástico que durante la década de 1960, la revista *Time* publicó «*Is God Dead?*» (¿Está muerto Dios?) La secularización afectó profundamente a la sociedad occidental. En los años 70, las iglesias grandes comenzaron a perder a sus miembros a gran escala. Paulien afirma: «Una persona secular es alguien que vive con poca o ninguna referencia a Dios o la práctica religiosa de manera habitual.

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<sup>349</sup> Roof Clark, «*Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion*» (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999) 13-14

<sup>350</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe «*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*» (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 299

<sup>351</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe «*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*» (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 299.

Ser una persona secular no suele ser una decisión consciente; la mayoría de la gente secular no es atea. La persona secular típica puede no ser hostil hacia la religión, pero es alguien que no practica la mayoría de las tradiciones religiosas, como leer la Biblia, orar o asistir al culto». <sup>352</sup>

El estudio del *Pew Research Center* en septiembre de 2018 también enfatizó la composición religiosa de los *baby boomers*. El estudio mostró que el 84% se definían a sí mismos como cristianos, el 3% como de credos no cristianos y el 13% como no afiliados («no religiosos»). El estudio también especificó que el 77% de ellos cree en Dios (absolutamente seguro), 14% cree en Dios (bastante seguro) y el 3% cree en Dios (no demasiado/nada seguro). Solo 5% dijo que no cree en Dios, mientras que el 1% dijo que no lo sabía.

Cuando se les preguntó sobre la importancia de las religiones en sus vidas, el 68% dijo que era muy importante, el 19% algo importante, el 6% no demasiado importante, el 6% no importante y el 1% no sabía. El 44% asistía a cultos religiosos al menos una vez a la semana, el 33% una o dos veces al mes, o algunas veces al año, el 22% rara vez o nunca y el 1% no sabía. El 68% de esta cohorte ora a diario, el 68% siente paz espiritual, 49% lee la Biblia al menos una vez a la semana, el 78% cree en el cielo y el 41% considera que existen normas específicas para lo que está bien o mal, mientras que el 56% consideran que el bien o el mal depende de la situación.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Paulien, Jon «*Everlasting Gospel, Ever - Changing World*»(Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2008) 27.

<sup>353</sup> «Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics». Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Modificado por última vez 19 septiembre 2018. Consulta 13 agosto 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/baby-boomer/region/south/>.

## Gen X

La Generación X es la generación nacida entre 1965-1980 (a veces aparece como 1965-1979). El nombre «Generación X» proviene de una novela de Douglas Coupland, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, [Generación X: Cuentos para una cultura acelerada], publicada en 1991». <sup>354</sup> Famosos de la Generación X son Michael Jordan, Paula Abdul, Charles Barkley, Tiger Woods y Jeff Bezos, fundador de amazon.com. Ningún miembro de esta generación ha servido hasta ahora como presidente de los Estados Unidos.

Al igual que la generación silenciosa, la Generación X ha sido descrita como una generación «intermedia». Atrapados entre los *baby boomers* y los *millenials* en términos de poder social y político. La generación X representa solo el 16% de la riqueza de la nación, mientras que los *baby boomers* poseen más de la mitad (56%), de acuerdo a un análisis de los datos de la Reserva Federal realizado por el economista Gray Kimbrough. En 2008, a una edad promedio de 35 años, la Generación X poseía solo el 9% de la riqueza del país, menos de la mitad de lo que tenían los *baby boomers* cuando tenían 35 años. <sup>355</sup>

Esta generación ha sido una de las más afectadas en cuanto a valores familiares. «Durante la era infantil de la generación X, la familia estadounidense soportó

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<sup>354</sup> Julia Kagan. ««Generation X (Gen X)». Investopedia. Investopedia, 22 de junio de 2020. Modificado por última vez el 22 de junio de 2020. Consulta 14 agosto 2020. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/generation-x-genx.asp>.

<sup>355</sup> Julia Kagan, «Generation X (Gen X)». Investopedia. Investopedia, 22 de junio de 2020. Modificado por última vez el 22 de junio de 2020. Consulta 14 agosto 2020. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/generation-x-genx.asp>.

innumerables nuevos movimientos y tendencias: feminismo, libertad sexual, una epidemia de divorcios, menos películas clasificadas como G, manuales de crianza que les decían a los padres que «se tomaran en cuenta a sí mismos» antes que las necesidades de los niños, los derechos de los homosexuales, el incidente de Chappaquiddick, los desnudos en las películas, una ética de crecimiento demográfico cero, la película *Kramer contra Kramer* y el caso judicial Roe contra Wade». Un destacado académico en 1969 proclamó en el *Washington Post* que la familia necesitaba «un entierro decente».<sup>356</sup>

Según Strauss y Howe, «La decimotercera (Generación X) es la generación más abortada en la historia de Estados Unidos. Después de un fuerte aumento a fines de la década de 1960 y principios de la de 1970, la tasa de abortos aumentó otro 80 por ciento durante los primeros seis años (1973 a 1979) después de la decisión *Roe vs. Wade* de la Corte Suprema. Durante los años de nacimiento de la última ola de la generación decimotercera, las futuras madres abortaron un feto de cada tres».<sup>357</sup>

Posteriormente, los autores añaden:

En 1962, la mitad de todas las mujeres adultas creían que los padres con malos matrimonios deberían permanecer juntos por el bien de los hijos; en 1980, solo uno de cada cinco pensaba así. Un niño de 13 años en la década de 1980 enfrentaba el doble de riesgo de divorcio de sus padres que un niño *boomer* a mediados de la década de 1960, y tres veces el riesgo que enfrentaba un niño de la generación silenciosa en 1950. Cuatro quintas partes de los adultos divorciados de hoy profesan ser más felices después, pero la mayoría de sus hijos sienten lo contrario.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> Neil Howe, and William Strauss. «*Millennials Rising: the next Great Generation*»(New York: Vintage Books, 2006.) 307.

<sup>357</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe «*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*» (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc, 1991) 299.

<sup>358</sup> William Strauss, and Neil Howe «*The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*».

Como fuerza laboral, la Generación X ha hecho mucho para mejorar el lugar de trabajo; introdujeron la noción de equilibrio entre el trabajo y la vida privada. Los miembros de la Generación X vieron a la Generación Silenciosa y a los *Baby Boomers* convertirse en adictos al trabajo en una fuerza laboral que fomentaba las largas horas y la rutina. En lugar de adoptar esta mentalidad, los profesionales de la Generación X buscaron un equilibrio entre el trabajo y la vida.<sup>359</sup>

En cuanto a tecnología, la generación x son inmigrantes, pero pueden hacerlo muy bien, especialmente la última ola. Los miembros de la generación X no se criaron con Internet, pero sí tuvieron acceso a él en sus carreras universitarias. La falta de herramientas tecnológicas y de Internet afectó positivamente la forma en que realizan negocios y establecen relaciones en sus primeros años de vida. Como resultado, la generación X puede establecer conexiones más sólidas y colaborar de forma más natural en el lugar de trabajo.<sup>360</sup>

El estudio del *Pew Research Center* en septiembre de 2018 también enfatizó la composición religiosa de la Generación X. El estudio mostró que el 70% se definía a sí mismos como cristianos, el 6% como de credos no cristianos, el 23% como no afiliados («no religiosos») y el 1% no lo sabía. El estudio también reconoció que el 64% de ellos cree en Dios (absolutamente seguro), el 20% cree en Dios (bastante seguro) y el 5% cree

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<sup>359</sup> Fabiano, Kyle Schnitzer and Jennifer. «These Are the 5 Main Generation X Characteristics You See in the Workplace». Ladders. Ladders, August 13, 2020. Modificado por última vez 13 agosto 2020. Consulta 14 agosto 2020. <https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/these-are-generation-x-characteristics-in-the-office-and-their-new-label>.

<sup>360</sup> Fabiano, Kyle Schnitzer and Jennifer. These Are the 5 Main Generation X Characteristics You See in the Workplace.

en Dios (no demasiado/nada seguro). El 9% dijo que no cree en Dios, mientras que el 2% dijo que no lo sabía.

Cuando se les preguntó sobre la importancia de las religiones en sus vidas, el 53% dijo que era muy importante, el 25% algo importante, el 11% no demasiado importante y el 11% no era necesario. El 34% asistía a cultos religiosos al menos una vez a la semana, el 35% una o dos veces al mes, o algunas veces al año, el 31% rara vez o nunca, y el 1% no lo sabía. El 56% de esta cohorte ora a diario, el 58% siente paz espiritual, el 36% lee la Biblia al menos una vez a la semana, el 72% cree en el cielo y el 35% considera que existen estándares específicos para lo que está bien o mal, mientras que el 63% considera que el bien o el mal depende de la situación.<sup>361</sup>

### **Milenials**

Cualquier persona nacida entre 1981 y 1996 se considera *Milenial*. Para comenzar a estudiar en lo que podría ser único en la próxima cohorte, el *Pew Research Center* decidió utilizar 1996 como el último año de nacimiento de esta generación. Los *milenials* son un grupo muy impulsado por los valores. Se les enseñó que cada voz importa y que vale la pena luchar por la justicia.<sup>362</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> «Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics». Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Modificado por última vez el 19 de septiembre de 2018. Consultado el 14 de agosto de 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/generation-x/>.

<sup>362</sup> Michael, Dimock. «Defining Generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins». Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center, 28 de julio de 2020. Modificado por última vez 28 julio 2020. Consulta 16 agosto 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>.

Howe y Strauss profetizaron en 2006 sobre ellos: «Como grupo, los *millennials* son diferentes a cualquier otra generación de jóvenes que se recuerde. Son más numerosos, más ricos, mejor educados y más diversos étnicamente. Más importante aún, están comenzando a manifestar una amplia gama de hábitos sociales positivos que los estadounidenses mayores ya no asocian con los jóvenes, incluido un nuevo enfoque en el trabajo en equipo, los logros, la modestia y la buena conducta».<sup>363</sup>

Según to *The Cut* (revista semanal neoyorquina), los cinco *millennials* más poderosos del mundo ahora son «Jared Kushner (n. 1981), Kim Jong-un (n. 1984), Mark Zuckerberg (n. 1984), Stephen Miller (n. 1985) y Mohammed bin Salman (n. 1985)».<sup>364</sup>

Otras celebridades del grupo son Serena Williams, Ivanka Trump, Kristen Stewart, Cristiano Ronaldo y Lionel Messi. «Los *millennials* se llaman así porque nacieron cerca o alcanzaron la mayoría de edad durante los albores del siglo XXI, el nuevo milenio». Como la primera generación que nació en un mundo digital, los miembros de este grupo se consideran «nativos digitales». La tecnología es una parte interna de su vida cotidiana. Se estima que revisan sus teléfonos hasta 150 veces al día.<sup>365</sup>

Los investigadores Thom S. Rainer y Jess W. dicen sobre los *Millennials*:

La Generación *Millennial* bien puede ser la generación más conectada con sus padres. Seis de cada diez *millennials* buscan consejo y orientación en sus padres. Este 60 por ciento también nos dijo que reciben muchos consejos de mamás y

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<sup>363</sup> Howe, Neil, and William Strauss. «Millennials Rising: the next Great Generation» (New York: Vintage Books, 2006) 13-14.

<sup>364</sup> Malone, Noreen. «The Five Millennials (Actually) Changing the World». *The Cut*. The Cut, 3 de septiembre de 2019. Modificado por última vez el 3 de septiembre de 2019. Consultado el 16 de agosto de 2020. <https://www.thecut.com/2019/09/five-millennials-changing-the-world.html>.

<sup>365</sup> James, Chen, «Millennials: Finances, Investing, and Retirement». Investopedia. Investopedia, 16 de julio de 2020. Modificado por última vez 16 Julio 2020. Consulta 16 agosto 2020. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/millennial.asp>.

papás. La mayoría de los *millennials* no llaman a sus padres solo para hablar. Los *millennials* llaman a los padres para averiguar cómo manejar a un compañero de trabajo perturbador o cómo dirigirse al banco para solicitar un préstamo. Los *millennials* quieren la opinión de los mayores sobre los planes profesionales futuros. Esta generación busca la sabiduría de sus padres.<sup>366</sup>

Según los mismos investigadores en términos de finanzas, los *millennials* también están sintiendo los efectos de una sociedad de consumo cuando se trata de asuntos financieros. Subrayan: «Ahorrar para la jubilación ya no significa simplemente abrir una cuenta en el banco. Ahora hay opciones. ¿Eliges colocar tu dinero en una cuenta 401 (k) o en una IRA? ¿Qué tipo de IRA: tradicional o Roth? ¿Toma decisiones de inversión usted mismo o le paga a alguien para que lo ayude? Si elige tener un asesor de inversiones, ¿qué institución financiera es la mejor?»<sup>367</sup> El punto es que con tantas opciones y consejos contradictorios, los *millennials* no saben por dónde empezar financieramente.

El análisis del *Pew Research Center* en septiembre de 2018 también subrayó la composición religiosa de los *millennials* más jóvenes, de entre 18 y 29 años. El estudio mostró que el 56% se definían a sí mismos como cristianos, el 8% como de credos no cristianos y el 36% como no afiliados («no religiosos»). El estudio también reconoció que el 50% de ellos cree en Dios (absolutamente seguro), el 21% cree en Dios (bastante seguro) y el 9% cree en Dios (no demasiado/nada seguro). El 17% dijo que no cree en Dios, mientras que el 3% dijo que no lo sabía.

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<sup>366</sup> Rainer, Thom S. Rainer, and Jess W. Rainer. «The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation» (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Pub. Group, 2011) 67.

<sup>367</sup> Rainer, Thom S. Rainer, and Jess W. Rainer. «The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation» (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Pub. Group, 2011) 87.



Cuando se les preguntó sobre la importancia de la religión en sus vidas, el 38% dijo que era muy importante, el 29% algo importante, el 17% no demasiado importante y el 16% no importante. El 28% asistía a los cultos religiosos al menos una vez a la semana, el 38% una o dos veces al mes, o algunas veces al año, el 34% rara vez o nunca. El 39% de esta cohorte ora al menos a diario, el 49% siente paz espiritual y el 25 lee la Biblia al menos una vez a la semana. El 68% cree en el cielo y el 21% considera que existen estándares específicos para lo que está bien o mal, mientras que el 78% supone que el bien o el mal dependen de la situación.<sup>368</sup>

### **Generación Z**

La Generación Z (también conocida como Gen Z, *iGen*, centenaria, la generación *Selfie* (del autoretrato), pos-mileniales, la generación *App* o *TransGeneration*) se refiere al grupo nacido entre 1997-2010. «La mayoría de los miembros de la generación Z planean casarse, tener hijos y comprar una casa, aunque probablemente más tarde que las generaciones anteriores. Y es menos probable que beban, fumen y consuman drogas. Sin embargo, tienen puntos de vista más progresistas sobre temas como la legalidad de la marihuana y la moralidad del matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo». Es la generación más grande y étnicamente diversa en la historia de Estados Unidos. Representan la vanguardia de la cambiante composición racial y étnica del país.

Una escasa mayoría (52%) son blancos no hispanos, significativamente menor que la proporción de milenials que eran blancos no hispanos en 2002 (61%). Uno de cada cuatro miembros de la Generación Z son hispanos, el 14% son negros, el 6% son asiáticos y el 5% son de otras razas o dos o más razas. En algunas regiones de EE. UU., La Generación Z ya ha cruzado este umbral. En la parte

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<sup>368</sup> «Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics». Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. Modificado por última vez 19 septiembre 2018. Consulta 14 agosto 2020. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/generation-x/>.

Occidental, solo el 40% de la Generación Z son blancos no hispanos. Hay un número parecido de hispanos, mientras que el 4% son negros, el 10% son asiáticos y el 6% son de otra raza. En el sur, el 46% de la generación Z son blancos no hispanos. La representación de las minorías es más baja en el Medio Oeste, donde más de dos tercios de la Generación Z (68%) son blancos no hispanos.<sup>369</sup>

La Generación Z creció con la tecnología, el Internet y las redes sociales, lo que a veces hace que sean estereotipados como guerreros adictos a la tecnología, antisociales o de la justicia social.<sup>370</sup>

Según una encuesta del *Pew Research Center* de 2018, el 95% de los jóvenes de 13 a 17 años tienen acceso a un teléfono inteligente, y una proporción similar (97%) usa al menos una de las siete principales plataformas en línea. YouTube, Instagram y Snapchat se encuentran entre los destinos en línea favoritos de los adolescentes. Alrededor del 85% dice que usa YouTube, el 72% usa Instagram y el 69% usa Snapchat. Facebook es menos popular entre los adolescentes: el 51% dice que usa este sitio de redes sociales. Alrededor del 45% de los adolescentes dicen que están en línea "casi constantemente" y un 44% adicional dice que están en línea varias veces al día. Algunos investigadores han sugerido que la creciente cantidad de tiempo que los adolescentes pasan en sus dispositivos móviles, y específicamente en las redes sociales, está contribuyendo al aumento de la ansiedad y la depresión en este grupo.<sup>371</sup>

En asociación con *Qualtrics Panels*, la investigadora Melissa Deckman recopiló datos de encuestas de más de dos mil 200 estadounidenses de la Generación Z a fines de julio de 2019 como parte de un estudio más extenso sobre el comportamiento político de

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<sup>369</sup> May 14, 2020, and Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik. «What We Know About Gen Z So Far». *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project*. Modificado por última vez 15 mayo 2020. Consulta 19 agosto 2020. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far/>.

<sup>370</sup> «Generation Z: Latest Gen Z News, Research, Facts & Strategies». *Business Insider*. *Business Insider*, n.d. Consulta 19 agosto 2020. <https://www.businessinsider.com/generation-z>.

<sup>371</sup> May 14, 2020, and Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik. «What We Know About Gen Z So Far». *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project*. Modificado por última vez 15 mayo 2020. Consulta 19 agosto 2020. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far/>.

esta generación emergente. Ella indica que, aunque no es una muestra puramente aleatoria, está diseñada para representar a la población adulta de la Generación Z en los Estados Unidos según el género, la raza y la región. Además, los datos se ponderaron para coincidir con los puntos de referencia del *Pew Research Center* en cuanto a sexo, raza/etnia e ingresos familiares, por lo que se asemeja mucho a la composición demográfica del público de EE. UU. para la edad demográfica en estudio.

Lo que encontré en términos de la religiosidad de los de la Generación Z es interesante. Ella afirma: «Cuando se trata de asistir a cultos religiosos, los estadounidenses de la Generación Z tienen muchas más probabilidades de faltar a la iglesia que de asistir regularmente. En general, encontré que el 45 por ciento de los estadounidenses de la generación Z rara vez informan o nunca asisten a la iglesia, mientras que solo 1 de cada 4 informa que asiste semanalmente o más».<sup>372</sup>

Deckman reconoce que la asistencia a la iglesia ha diferido históricamente con respecto a la raza y el género, así que aquí hay un seguimiento.

Entre mis encuestados, los afroamericanos informan tener las tasas más altas de asistencia semanal a la iglesia, lo que se compara con otras investigaciones que muestran que los afroamericanos asisten a la iglesia con más frecuencia que otros grupos [...] La asistencia a la iglesia entre los latinos que son de la Generación Z se asemeja más a los patrones de asistencia a la iglesia de la generación Z blancos, en lugar de la generación Z afroamericana, lo cual es consistente con otros estudios sobre el compromiso religioso entre los estadounidenses. Finalmente, los hombres de la Generación Z tienen un poco más de probabilidad de reportar asistir a la iglesia con más frecuencia que las mujeres de la Generación Z, aunque esta diferencia es solo marginalmente significativa ( $p < .10$ ). Sin embargo, este hallazgo es notable porque las mujeres siempre han sido más religiosas que los

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<sup>372</sup> Melissa Deckman. «Generation Z and Religion: What New Data Show». Religion in Public. Modificado por última vez e7 febrero 2020. Consulta 20 agosto 2020. <https://religioninpublic.blog/2020/02/10/generation-z-and-religion-what-new-data-show/>.

hombres, por lo que la Generación Z parece oponerse a esta tendencia histórica. No está claro por qué podría ser este el caso.<sup>373</sup>

Barna llama a la Generación Z la «primera generación verdaderamente ‘poscristiana’» y ha descubierto que la mayoría de las generaciones anteriores tenían una «educación básica sobre la Biblia y el cristianismo», pero no la Generación Z.<sup>374</sup> Otra investigación del Grupo Barna explica que los lazos con la religión de la Generación Z parecen más débiles que los de los milenials: es más probable que se identifiquen como ateos o agnósticos (21 por ciento frente a 15 por ciento), y la mayoría piensa que la asistencia a la iglesia no es importante. «Para la Generación Z, “ateo” ya no es una mala palabra: el porcentaje de adolescentes que se identifican como tales es el doble que el de la población general (13% frente al 6% de todos los adultos). La proporción de los que se identifican como cristianos también descende de generación en generación. Tres de cada cuatro *boomers* son cristianos protestantes o católicos (75%), mientras que solo tres de cada cinco jóvenes de 13 a 18 años dicen ser cristianos (59%)».<sup>375</sup>

### **Nuevas oportunidades para todas las generaciones**

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<sup>373</sup> Melissa Deckman. «Generation Z and Religion: What New Data Show». Religion in Public. Modificado por última vez 7 febrero 2020. Consulta 20 agosto 2020. <https://religioninpublic.blog/2020/02/10/generation-z-and-religion-what-new-data-show/>.

<sup>374</sup> Axis. «Strengths and Weaknesses of Generation Z: Parent's Guide». Strengths and Weaknesses of Generation Z | Parent's Guide. Consulta 21 agosto 2020. [https://info.axis.org/gen-z-parents?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI3YaR5ZWs6wIVkIvICh20EAsaEAAYAiAAEgKIh\\_D\\_BwE](https://info.axis.org/gen-z-parents?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI3YaR5ZWs6wIVkIvICh20EAsaEAAYAiAAEgKIh_D_BwE).

<sup>375</sup> Barna, «Atheism Doubles Among Generation Z» Barna Group, January 24, 2018, consulta 10 junio 2020, <https://www.barna.com/research/atheism-doubles-among-generation-z/>.

La asistencia a la iglesia es cada día más desafiante. Cada generación tiene sus razones; algunos están muriendo, envejeciendo o son más seculares. La conclusión es que menos personas se están conectando con la enseñanza de la Biblia. Sabemos que la fe viene del oír y oír la palabra de Dios. Romanos 10: 17

La inasistencia está afectando a todas las generaciones. Emba Christine escribió en el *Washington Post*:

En el *Pew Research Center*, los estudios que rastrean el panorama religioso de Estados Unidos encontraron que, aunque las creencias y prácticas religiosas han disminuido a un ritmo rápido para las personas de todas las edades, la caída ha sido más pronunciada entre las personas de 23 a 38 años. En 2019, aproximadamente dos tercios asistieron a los servicios de adoración «algunas veces al año» o menos, y 4 de cada 10 dicen que rara vez o nunca asisten. Hace una década, era más de la mitad y solo tres de cada 10, respectivamente.<sup>376</sup>

Barna también hizo una investigación fascinante sobre el creciente grupo que proclama amar a Jesús, pero no a la iglesia. Probablemente estén hablando de estructuras, edificios y tradiciones, ya que es cierto que esta sociedad ha hecho anticuerpos contra las religiones.

«Vivimos en una cultura estadounidense cada vez más secular. La religión se está retirando de la plaza pública, y las instituciones tradicionales como la iglesia ya no funcionan con la autoridad cultural que alguna vez tuvieron en generaciones pasadas. Hoy, casi la mitad de Estados Unidos no tiene iglesia. Sin embargo, aunque cada vez más estadounidenses están abandonando la iglesia institucional y sus límites definidos de

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<sup>376</sup> Emba, Christine. «Opinion | Why Millennials Are Skipping Church and Not Going Back.» The Washington Post, WP Company, 28 de octubre de 2019, [www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-millennials-are-skipping-church-and-not-going-back/2019/10/27/0d35b972-f777-11e9-8cf0-4cc99f74d127\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-millennials-are-skipping-church-and-not-going-back/2019/10/27/0d35b972-f777-11e9-8cf0-4cc99f74d127_story.html).

identidad religiosa, muchos todavía creen en Dios y practican la fe fuera de sus muros».<sup>377</sup>

Hay una gran diferencia entre lo posmoderno tradicional y lo posmoderno secular. El posmoderno secular es «muy espiritual», se toma tiempo para la meditación privada y disfruta de la adoración contemporánea y las reuniones de alabanza en los hogares, siempre y cuando no sea necesario que ofrezcan un compromiso a largo plazo. Están decididos a cultivar una relación personal con Dios por sí mismos, sin instituciones religiosas ni mandatos morales. Están a cargo de su propia vida espiritual.<sup>378</sup>

Esta investigación sostiene que todas las generaciones están listas para beneficiarse de un nuevo enfoque en el que una miríada de pequeñas congregaciones basadas en la tecnología y centradas en Jesús permitan que todos escuchen una vez más el verdadero evangelio.

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<sup>377</sup> «Meet Those Who ‘Love Jesus but Not the Church». *Barna Group*, [www.barna.com/research/meet-love-jesus-not-church/](http://www.barna.com/research/meet-love-jesus-not-church/).

<sup>378</sup> Jon Paulien, «*Everlasting Gospel, Ever - Changing World*» (Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2008), 28 – 32.

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## **CAPÍTULO 4**

### **IMPACTO HISTÓRICO DE LA PLANTACIÓN DE IGLESIAS EN LA IGLESIA ADVENTISTA**

#### *Contexto histórico*

¿Cuál ha sido el impacto histórico de la plantación de iglesias en el crecimiento de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día?

La iglesia ASD comenzó como un movimiento misionero, lo que explica su expansión mundial en unos cien años. Los ASD se identifican con los tres ángeles de Apocalipsis 14: 6-13, que vuelan en medio del cielo predicando el evangelio eterno. Su creencia fundamental número trece, El Remanente y su Misión, declara:

La iglesia universal está compuesta de todos los que creen verdaderamente en Cristo; pero en los últimos días, una época de apostasía generalizada, se llamó a un remanente para que guarde los mandamientos de Dios y la fe de Jesús. Este remanente anuncia la llegada de la hora del juicio, proclama la salvación por medio de Cristo y pregona la proximidad de su segunda venida. Esta proclamación está simbolizada por los tres ángeles de Apocalipsis 14; coincide con la hora del juicio en los cielos y, como resultado, se produce una obra de arrepentimiento y reforma en la Tierra. Se invita a todos los creyentes a participar personalmente en este testimonio mundial. (Daniel 7: 9-14; Isaías 1: 9; 11: 11; Jeremías 23: 3; Miqueas 2: 12; 2 Corintios 5: 10; 1 Pedro 1: 16-19; 4: 17; 2 Pedro 3: 10-14; Judas 3, 14; Apocalipsis 12: 17; 14: 6-12; 18: 1-4.)<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> «The Remnant and Its Mission». *Adventist.org*. Modificado por última vez 21 noviembre 2019. Consulta 13 septiembre 2020. <https://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental-beliefs/church/the-remnant-and-its-mission/>.

Esta apasionante creencia empujó a los misioneros adventistas a acudir a cada nación, tribu, lengua y pueblo. La plantación de iglesias estaba a la vanguardia de esa misión. Jaime Springer White, cofundador de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día y esposo de Elena G. de White, a menudo llamado el apóstol Pablo del movimiento adventista, al comentar sobre el impacto de la plantación de iglesias en lo que respecta a los pastores, declaró:

No hay mejor manera en la que un predicador puede demostrar su valía como al entrar en nuevos campos. Allí puede ver los frutos de su labor. Y si tiene éxito en levantar iglesias y establecerlas para que den buenos frutos, les da a sus hermanos la mejor prueba de que es enviado del Señor [...] Si no pueden levantar iglesias y amigos para sustentarlas, entonces ciertamente la causa de la verdad no los necesita, y tienen las mejores razones para concluir que cometieron un triste error cuando pensaron que Dios los llamó para enseñar el mensaje del tercer ángel.<sup>380</sup>

Esta pasión por la multiplicación generó un movimiento tan poderoso que la membresía de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día se multiplicó por siete durante su primer cuarto de siglo. «En lugar de aproximadamente 3,500 miembros de iglesia cuando se organizó la Conferencia General en 1863, había 26,112 a mediados de 1888. Estos se distribuían en treinta y dos asociaciones locales y cinco campos misioneros y en 901 iglesias». Como puede verse, el promedio por iglesia era de unas 29 personas, lo que evidencia un movimiento de pequeñas congregaciones que se multiplicaba rápidamente.

El crecimiento fue tan rápido que en 1901 la Iglesia tenía 74.500 miembros más que en 1863. También saltó de las seis asociaciones locales originales a cincuenta y siete,

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<sup>380</sup> James White. «Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald, Vol. 19, No. 20, 15 de abril de 1862». - Ellen G. White Writings. Consulta 17 septiembre 2020. <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/1684.5465>.

además de cuarenta y una misiones esparcidas en todas las partes importantes del mundo excepto en China.

Richard W. Schwarz agrega:

Desde 1885 en adelante, las actividades misionales adventistas se expandieron dramáticamente. Hasta cierto punto reflejaban el interés general de los protestantes en las misiones extranjeras de la época. Incitados por hombres como Dwight L. Moody y John R. Mott, centenares de jóvenes norteamericanos se comprometieron a llevar el Evangelio a los rincones más remotos de la tierra, a evangelizar al mundo «en esta generación». Los adventistas tuvieron sus propios promotores de las misiones; los más influyentes fueron S. N. Haskell y Elena de White. Ambos escribieron y hablaron con la convicción de testigos presenciales de los desafíos y las oportunidades de tierras lejanas. En 1882 Haskell hizo su primera visita a Europa. Tres años más tarde fue pionero del mensaje del advenimiento en Australia y Nueva Zelanda.<sup>381</sup>

Dios continuó bendiciendo a la iglesia, y la feligresía se elevó, de 78,000 en 1901 a más de 576,000 en 1945. Schwarz afirma que la década de 1920 vio a la iglesia expandirse casi cuatro veces, de aproximadamente 2,500 congregaciones a más de 10,000 en 1930.<sup>382</sup>

El año 1921 marcó un hito para los Adventistas, al sobrepasar los campos mundiales la cantidad de miembros de la feligresía de Norteamérica. En 1945, la feligresía combinada de los campos no norteamericanos constituían el 63 por ciento de la iglesia. Por sí misma, Norteamérica era todavía cuatro veces mayor que la siguiente división, la Interamericana, pero el ímpetu del crecimiento en miembros hacía tiempo se había trasladado a las regiones fuera de los Estados Unidos y Canadá.<sup>383</sup>

Según el Informe Estadístico Anual del año 2020 de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día, pasó de 88,718 iglesias y 74,843 grupos organizados en todo el mundo en

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<sup>381</sup> Richard W. Schwarz, *Portadores de luz: Historia de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día*. (Buenos Aires: Asociación Casa Editora Sudamericana, 2003) 207

<sup>382</sup> Schwarz, *Portadores de luz: Historia de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día*, 273

<sup>383</sup> Schwarz, *Portadores de luz: Historia de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día*, 273

2018 a 91,140 iglesias y 72,605 grupos organizados en 2019. Significa 2,422 iglesias más y 2,238 grupos menos, lo que representa una ganancia neta de 184 congregaciones.<sup>384</sup>

Esta visión de plantar iglesias en nuevos territorios es congruente con los escritos de Elena de White, profeta y fundadora de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día. Ella escribió en 1899: «Debemos tratar, en todo lugar, de suscitar un grupo de creyentes que se una con nosotros en levantar el estandarte de la verdad, y en trabajar por los ricos y los pobres. Luego, a medida que se establezcan Iglesias, habrá un aumento de ayudantes para trabajar en pro de los indigentes y perdidos».<sup>385</sup> También escribió: «El Señor desea que en muchos lugares se lleven a cabo esfuerzos renovados para fundar pequeños centros médicos. Hay que hacer una obra que abra el camino para la promulgación de la verdad, y eso aumentará la fe de las almas».<sup>386</sup>

Este método de seguir plantando nuevas iglesias ha sido una bendición para la iglesia ASD. Esta investigación respalda la afirmación planteada en 1990 por C. Peter Wagner en su libro *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* [Plantación de iglesias para una cosecha mayor], de que: «La metodología evangelística más eficaz bajo el cielo es plantar nuevas iglesias».<sup>387</sup>

### **Filosofía misionera y administrativa temprana de los adventistas del séptimo día**

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<sup>384</sup> *Adventist World Statistics*. Consulta 31 agosto 2020. <https://www.adventiststatistics.org/>.

<sup>385</sup> Elena G. de White, *Obreros evangélicos*. (Buenos Aires: Asociación Casa Publicadora Sudamericana, 1997) 451.

<sup>386</sup> Elena G. de White, *La evangelización de las ciudades*. (México: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2012) 140.

<sup>387</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*. Third Edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2004), 24

La Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día comenzó en los Estados Unidos de América como una enmienda del Movimiento Millerita de 1844. El primer grupo organizado de iglesias fue la Asociación de Michigan, organizada el 6 de octubre de 1861, mediante la elección de un presidente, un secretario y un comité ejecutivo de tres, según el historiador J. N. Loughborough, quien desde 1865-1868, se desempeñó como su presidente.

A pesar de la fuerte resistencia de establecer una nueva institución que pudiera convertirse en Babilonia, a fines de la década de 1840 y principios de la de 1850, ya se habían organizado siete asociaciones para octubre de 1862. A medida que Loughborough revela los hechos de aquellos primeros días en la organización de la Iglesia, menciona algo notable al afirmar:

Las siguientes clases de dirigentes y oficiales de la iglesia cristiana aparecen en el Nuevo Testamento: apóstoles, evangelistas, ancianos, obispos, pastores y diáconos. Estos los dividiríamos en dos grandes clases: los que ejercen su cargo en virtud de un llamado especial de Dios y los seleccionados por la Iglesia: los primeros abarcan a los apóstoles y evangelistas; y los últimos, a los ancianos, obispos, pastores y diáconos. «Apóstoles proviene de la palabra *apostolos* y significa uno enviado, un mensajero. Se usa para designar en un sentido preeminente a los doce apóstoles enviados por Cristo, pero no puede limitarse a ellos ni a esa época. Evangelistas [...] En el Nuevo Testamento, un evangelista es un predicador del evangelio, no está fijo en ningún lugar, sino que viaja como misionero para predicar el evangelio y establecer iglesias». Ver Hechos 21: 8; Efesios 4: 11; 2 Timoteo 4: 5.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>388</sup>J.N. Loughborough. «The Church: Its Organization, Order and Discipline». Consultado el 2 de septiembre de 2020. <http://www.adventaudio.org/ebooks/files/pdf/Loughborough - The Church, its Organization, Order and Discipline.pdf>.

Esta declaración es significativa porque enmarca la filosofía eclesiástica que impulsaría el crecimiento evangelístico sin precedentes de la Iglesia Adventista en los Estados Unidos y el mundo. «Las iglesias protestantes contrataban ministros para servir como pastores a iglesias ya establecidas. Los adventistas no lo hicieron. Los primeros líderes adventistas decidieron que la mejor manera de cumplir con nuestra misión era invertir el diezmo en los salarios de los obreros de tiempo completo que fueran evangelistas (ganaran almas) y plantadores de iglesias (establecieran nuevas iglesias)».<sup>389</sup>

En los primeros días de la Iglesia Adventista, usando el plan bíblico para el ministerio como se describe en el Nuevo Testamento, nuestra tasa de crecimiento denominacional fue tremenda. Otras denominaciones se preguntaban cómo crecíamos tan rápido. Teníamos una doctrina impopular, un día de culto impopular y muchas dificultades que otras iglesias no tenían y, sin embargo, estábamos creciendo más rápidamente que cualquiera de ellas. La razón por la que estábamos creciendo tan rápido era sencilla. Los ancianos se estaban ocupando de las iglesias existentes, lo que les dio a los ministros del evangelio la capacidad de ingresar a ciudades y áreas sin presencia Adventista y plantar nuevas iglesias. Las iglesias existentes podían evangelizar en las áreas donde estaban ubicadas, bajo la dirección de los ancianos. El Espíritu Santo se ocupaba de las iglesias existentes al usar a los ancianos como pastores, y Cristo se convirtió en su ministro mientras los ancianos y los miembros trabajaban por las almas.<sup>390</sup>

Los ASD se comprometieron a seguir el modelo de misión del Nuevo Testamento, basado en el sacerdocio de todos los creyentes. Se negaron a establecer pastores en sus iglesias locales. «En lugar de utilizar tales pastores, los pioneros Adventistas optaron por que las iglesias establecidas fueran dirigidas por líderes locales, mientras reservaban la mayoría de los salarios para el clero que iniciaba nuevas iglesias

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<sup>389</sup> Ron Gladden. «Evangelism and Church Planting». *Ministry Magazine*. Consulta 2 septiembre 2020. <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1999/10/evangelism-and-church-planting>.

<sup>390</sup> *Who Will Provide Pastoral Care for the Existing Churches?* Consulta 4 septiembre 2020. <http://1844toeternity.com/book/who-will-provide-pastoral-care-for-the-existing-churches/>.

en nuevas áreas, es decir, para el clero que cumplía una función apostólica. Tan generalizada fue esta política que hasta 1909, la Iglesia Adventista todavía estaba organizada de esta manera a nivel mundial (Adventistas del Séptimo Día y Bautistas del Séptimo Día, 1909)». <sup>391</sup>

Solo los apóstoles y evangelistas (plantadores de iglesias) eran reconocidos como oficiales itinerantes de la Iglesia. Los diáconos, ancianos y pastores eran nombrados por las iglesias locales como líderes laicos para cuidar y nutrir las iglesias recién plantadas. Según J. N. Loughborough, pionero adventista, cuyo libro, *The Church: Its Organization, Order, and Discipline* [La Iglesia: su organización, orden y disciplina], publicado en 1907, sirvió como referencia para la administración de la Iglesia hasta que se adoptó un Manual oficial en 1932, los ancianos, obispos y los pastores son un mismo oficio. <sup>392</sup> Él afirma:

Que los ancianos y los obispos son idénticos, también se muestra en Hechos 20: 17, 28. La palabra ancianos en el versículo 17 viene de *presbuteros*, y la palabra obispos o supervisores en el versículo 28 viene de *episcopos* (obispo). El término pastor proviene de *poimen* y significa literalmente un pastor de ovejas, un pastor, especialmente un maestro, un guía espiritual de una iglesia en particular. La definición de este término muestra que significa el mismo oficio que *presbuteros* (anciano) y *episcopos* (obispo), un oficio local confinado a una iglesia en particular. <sup>393</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> Shane N. Anderson «Reducing Pastor-Dependency in the New Market Seventh-Day» Consulta 2 septiembre 2020. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1319&context=dmin>.

<sup>392</sup> Wesley McDonald, *Let my Pastors Go* (USA: Self-published, S/D) 40. Also, as From 1844 to Eternity. Consulta 16 septiembre 2020. <http://1844toeternity.com/>.

<sup>393</sup> J.N. Loughborough. «The Church: Its Organization, Order and Discipline». Consulta 2 septiembre 2020. <http://www.adventaudio.org/ebooks/files/pdf/Loughborough - The Church, its Organization, Order and Discipline.pdf>, p.129.



Russell Burrill, experto en el tema, explica: «Lo asombroso es que el adventismo primitivo, consideraba el papel pastoral como un puesto laico local y no como un puesto del clero. El resultado fue que desarrollaron un sistema donde el clero era principalmente plantador de iglesias y evangelistas. Una vez plantadas, se enseñaba a las iglesias locales a cuidarse a sí mismas, mientras que el clero tenía la libertad de seguir plantando nuevas iglesias. Las iglesias locales eran confiadas a ancianos laicos locales no remunerados».<sup>394</sup>

El Dr. Burrill continua:

Por lo tanto, durante los primeros cincuenta a sesenta años de su historia, la iglesia Adventista existió sin «pastores establecidos» sobre las iglesias. Incluso la iglesia más grande de la denominación, en Battle Creek, operaba sin un pastor pagado. James White sirvió como pastor durante algunos años, pero al mismo tiempo, también fue presidente de la Asociación General, jefe de la obra de publicaciones y estaba a cargo de la obra médica. Su trabajo como pastor era su contribución a la iglesia local a la que pertenecía. En otras palabras, servía como anciano local a cargo de pastorear la iglesia.<sup>395</sup>

Las iglesias enviaban su diezmo a las asociaciones locales para financiar al clero que estaba plantando nuevas iglesias. Una diferencia significativa entre los apóstoles/evangelistas y ancianos/pastores era que los primeros eran líderes itinerantes mientras que los segundos eran líderes de iglesias locales. «Los apóstoles viajaban de iglesia en iglesia y establecían nuevas congregaciones. Los ancianos, sin embargo, estaban relacionados a una iglesia local y no tenían autoridad sobre otras iglesias. Sin

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<sup>394</sup> Russell Burrill, *Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement*. (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1999) 50

<sup>395</sup> Russell Burrill, *Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement*, 502

embargo, los apóstoles y los ancianos trabajaban en estrecha colaboración para dar liderazgo a la iglesia». <sup>396</sup>

Kurt W. Johnson, citando a C. Mervyn Maxwell, se refiere a una entrevista que un periodista le hizo al predicador adventista G. B. Starr, un famoso evangelista durante las décadas de 1870, 80 y 90, durante una campaña evangelística, que arroja luz sobre el modelo de ministerio adventista en sus inicios.

El periodista le preguntó a Starr por qué los adventistas se habían multiplicado tan rápido. Su respuesta: «No tenemos pastor establecido. A nuestras iglesias se les enseña con entusiasmo a cuidarse a sí mismas, mientras que casi todos nuestros ministros trabajan como evangelistas en nuevos campos. En el invierno, van a las iglesias, al salón o la escuela y educan a los creyentes. En el verano, usamos carpas, instalándolas en las ciudades, o pueblos donde enseñamos a la gente estas doctrinas. Este año operaremos alrededor de 100 carpas de esta manera». <sup>397</sup>

Puede que no usemos los mismos métodos hoy, pero el principio es el mismo, un laicado involucrado y empoderado. El sacerdocio de todos los creyentes debe volver a ser la norma. También debemos encontrar una manera de conectarnos con las sendas antiguas en un renovado celo de discipulado, evangelismo y multiplicación intencional del reino de Dios.

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<sup>396</sup> Gerard, P. Damsteegt, «Have Adventists Abandoned the Biblical Model of Leadership of the Local Church?» (2005). Faculty Publications. Paper 60. Consulta 2 septiembre 2020. <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/church-history-pubs/60>, p.647

<sup>397</sup> Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups: from Theory to Reality*. (Review and Herald Pub. Association, 2011) 165

## Pastores establecidos

Hasta 1883, los ministros estaban principalmente involucrados en la evangelización; sin embargo, debido a presiones y desacuerdos, en 1882, la Asociación General nombró a tres líderes de la iglesia, W. H. Littlejohn, J. O. Corliss y H. A. St. John, para que prepararan un manual. Lo hicieron y sugirieron que las asociaciones podrían emplear a ministros que no pudieran hacer trabajo evangelístico pero que limitaran su ministerio a las iglesias existentes.

En este contexto, el manual hablaba de dos clases de ministros. En cuanto a la primera clase, a la que pertenecían la mayoría de los ministros, decía: «En la iglesia cristiana de nuestra época se encuentra una clase de ministros que, aunque tienen especial éxito en levantar iglesias en nuevos campos, son de poca utilidad para esas iglesias después de haber sido completamente adoctrinadas». Acerca de la segunda clase, declaraba: «Hay quienes parecen especialmente adaptados para desempeñar el papel de pastores de iglesias ya creadas. A estos últimos les resultaría muy difícil, si no imposible, tener éxito en lo que podría llamarse obra puramente evangelística». El manual recomendaba que las asociaciones tuvieran en cuenta esta distinción, de modo que se pudieran utilizar ambas clases de ministros. «Aquellos que tienen la supervisión de las asociaciones, por lo tanto, harían bien en reconocer esta distinción, ya que les permitiría utilizar el trabajo de estas dos clases de predicadores, asignando a cada uno su propio trabajo».<sup>398</sup>

En la sesión de la Asociación General de noviembre de 1883, el Comité Ejecutivo, junto con un comité de diez nombrados por la sesión, consideró la propuesta de adoptar el manual de la iglesia que ya había sido publicado en la *Review and Herald*. Al final de las deliberaciones, el grupo rechazó unánimemente el manual de la iglesia propuesto. Sin embargo, el tema no había terminado. De hecho, representaba el comienzo de una tendencia hacia el empleo de ministros como pastores establecidos.

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<sup>398</sup> Damsteegt, P. Gerard, «Have Adventists Abandoned the Biblical Model of Leadership of the Local Church?» 659.

Elena G. de White se opuso firmemente a la asignación de pastores. La fundadora sabía que el cambio de orden no era lo mejor para la organización y dio muchos reproches en este sentido, pero probablemente lo que escribió en el Boletín de la Asociación General el 12 de abril de 1901 le puso la tapa al pomo. White enfatizó que los ministros no deben seguir revoloteando sobre las iglesias, un concepto que se usaba comúnmente en el inglés estadounidense para ilustrar a alguien que estaba supervisando algo con atención. Ella dijo:

Nuestros ministros deben trabajar en el plan evangélico de ministrar. Se me ha presentado que en todo Estados Unidos hay campos baldíos. Al viajar por el sur rumbo al congreso, vi una ciudad tras otra en las cuales no se ha trabajado. ¿Cuál es el problema? Los pastores están revoloteando sobre las iglesias que conocen la verdad, mientras miles de personas perecen sin Cristo. Si se diera la instrucción adecuada, si se siguieran los métodos debidos, cada miembro de iglesia haría su obra como miembro del cuerpo. Haría obra misionera cristiana. Pero las iglesias se están muriendo, y necesitan que un pastor les predique. Debe enseñárseles a traer un diezmo fiel a Dios, para que él las fortalezca y bendiga. Debe lograrse la armonía entre ellos, para que el sopo de Dios venga sobre ellos. Debe enseñárseles que a menos que puedan permanecer por sí mismos sin pastor, necesitan ser convertidos de nuevo, y bautizados de nuevo. Necesitan nacer de nuevo.<sup>399</sup>

Líderes como Arthur G. Daniells también alzaron la voz contra la idea de asignar pastores. Aquel que tuvo el privilegio de ser el presidente que más duró en la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día y dirigió el proceso de reorganización de 1901 a 1903 sabía que estaba mal. En una reunión ministerial en Los Ángeles, California, en marzo de 1912, dijo:

No hemos asignado a nuestros ministros sobre iglesias como pastores en gran medida. En algunas de las iglesias muy grandes, hemos elegido pastores, pero

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<sup>399</sup> Ellen White, The General Conference Bulletin, April 12, 1901, 204. Consulta 4 septiembre 2020. <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1901-01ex09.pdf>

como regla, nos hemos mantenido listos para el servicio del campo, la obra evangelística, y nuestros hermanos y hermanas se han mantenido listos para mantener sus cultos y llevar adelante su trabajo en la iglesia, sin pastores asignados. Y espero que este nunca deje de ser el orden de las cosas en esta denominación; porque cuando dejemos de trabajar en nuestro movimiento de vanguardia y comencemos a asentarnos sobre nuestras iglesias, a permanecer junto a ellas, y pensar y orar por ellas y hacer la obra que ellas deben hacer, entonces nuestras iglesias comenzarán a debilitarse y perderán su vida y espíritu, y nos paralizaremos y fosilizaremos y nuestra obra retrocederá.<sup>400</sup>

A pesar de tales declaraciones, después de la muerte de Elena G. de White en 1915 y con el fin de la presidencia de Daniells en 1920, finalmente se produjo el cambio de práctica. En una década, la asignación de pastores comenzó a implementarse de manera gradual pero amplia en los Estados Unidos y el mundo.<sup>401</sup>

Después de la muerte de la profetisa, la voz que habló con más fuerza en contra de los ministros que tomaban el control o que revoloteaban sobre las congregaciones locales fue silenciada [...] El nombramiento de «pastores asignados» tuvo un impacto dramático en el papel de liderazgo de los ancianos en la congregación. Con el ministro como el líder más importante en la estructura organizativa de la iglesia local, la junta de la iglesia, después del ministro, se convirtió en la voz de liderazgo decisiva responsable de la dirección de la iglesia local. Ahora, la influencia del anciano generalmente se reducía a liderar las responsabilidades de la plataforma, partir el pan en la Comunión, dar consejos a la junta de la iglesia, visitar a los miembros y ayudar al ministro local. Casi veinte años después de la muerte de la señora White, este cambio de autoridad de los ancianos se institucionalizó con la adopción oficial del primer Manual de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día en 1932.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups: from Theory to Reality*. (Review and Herald Pub. Association, 2011) 165

<sup>401</sup> Shane N. Anderson «Reducing Pastor-Dependency in the New Market Seventh-Day ...» Consulta 2 septiembre 2020.  
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1319&context=dmin>.

<sup>402</sup> Gerard, P. Damsteegt, «Have Adventists Abandoned the Biblical Model of Leadership of the Local Church?» 672.

Como se dijo, el impacto de asignar los pastores fue devastador para nuestra misión. Según Burrill, el cambio de orden y filosofía provocó una caída dramática en la plantación de iglesias; en la década de 1870, se plantaba una nueva iglesia cada año por cada dos ministros ordenados. Él añade: «En la década de 1880, la tasa era por cada cinco o seis ministros ordenados, y en la década de 1890, se establecía una nueva iglesia cada año por cada cuatro ministros ordenados».<sup>403</sup>

Burrill lamentaba cómo en la década de 1990, se requería más de ciento veinte pastores para levantar una sola iglesia cada año en la División Norteamericana de los Adventistas del Séptimo Día, que incluye: Estados Unidos, Canadá, posesiones francesas de St. Pierre y Miquelón, Bermudas, Guam, Isla Wake, Islas Marianas del Norte y tres estados en libre asociación con los Estados Unidos: Palau, las Islas Marshall y los Estados Federados de Micronesia.

McDonald's pone los números de otra manera, indicando que de 1863 a 1932, en 69 años, el número de iglesias creció 18.3 veces, pasando de 125 a 2285 congregaciones. Demuestra que de 1932 a 2017, 85 años, el número de iglesias en Norteamérica solo creció 2.4 veces, de 2285 a 5561. Además, de 1863 a 1932, el número de miembros se multiplicó por 38.8, de 3,500 a 135,837. Sin embargo, de 1932 a 2017, el número de miembros creció solo 9.2 veces, pasando de 135,837 a 1,249,715 afiliados.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> Burrill, Russell. *Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement*, 52.

<sup>404</sup> Wesley McDonald, *Let my Pastors Go* 49,50.

## Un nuevo movimiento de plantación de iglesias

Después de más de sesenta años de letargo, finalmente llegó el nuevo amanecer de la plantación de iglesias. Es justo decir que el Instituto de Evangelismo de la División Norteamericana (NADEI) ha jugado un papel clave en ello. Como la institución subrayó en su propia reseña histórica en 2010: «NADEI ha sido directamente responsable del resurgimiento de la plantación de iglesias en la División Norteamericana, liderando el establecimiento de las ponencias sobre plantación de iglesias *SEEDS* que han llevado a plantar más de 1,500 iglesias en los últimos catorce años».<sup>405</sup>

1995 fue el año en que la iglesia en Norteamérica tocó fondo. El número de nuevas iglesias disminuyó. «Como resultado, hubo líderes en Norteamérica, incluido Russell Burrill (ex director del Instituto de Evangelismo NAD) y otros, que iniciaron las Ponencias de Plantación de Iglesias *SEEDS*».<sup>406</sup>

Es fundamental decir que para la primera ponencia de *SEEDS* en 1996; fue necesario pedirle a un experto en plantación de iglesias de otra denominación que nos explicara el proceso, ya que la iglesia ASD en Norteamérica no tenía a nadie preparado para capacitar a la gente. La formación presentó un desafío; la visión era clara, pero las iglesias y las Asociaciones no estaban preparadas y se destapó una caja de pandora.

En su disertación doctoral ministerial: *Implementation of a Confence-Wide Church Planting Strategy within the Texas Conference* [Implementación de una estrategia

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<sup>405</sup> «History». North American Division Evangelism Institute. Consulta 17 septiembre 2020. <https://www.nadei.org/about/history>.

<sup>406</sup> «Seeds Church Planting Conference». North American Division Evangelism Institute. <https://www.nadei.org/nadequipping/church-planting/seeds-church-planting-conference>.

de plantación de iglesias a nivel de Asociación dentro de la Asociación de Texas], el ex asociado de *NADEI*, Tom Evans, amplía:

Con el nacimiento de las Ponencias *SEEDS* de la División Norteamericana en 1996, ha habido una mayor conciencia e interés en la plantación de iglesias en toda la división. Desafortunadamente, muchos asistentes entusiastas de *SEEDS* regresaban a su Asociación local y no descubrían ninguna estrategia o sistema de apoyo para alentar la plantación de iglesias. Se necesitaba un proyecto piloto de Asociación que pudiera proporcionar un modelo para la División. El proyecto debía demostrar una forma sistemática de plantar numerosas iglesias. Un sistema para el apoyo y el desarrollo continuo de las iglesias nuevas sería crucial. Además, estas iglesias plantadas no debían simplemente reorganizar a los santos atrayendo a adventistas ya comprometidos, sino que debían tener un impacto significativo en la cosecha.<sup>407</sup>

Según Evans, era necesario probar un modelo de bajo costo que involucrara a pastores de tiempo completo, utilizando su capacitación y experiencia en el ministerio. Un modelo que valorara la iglesia local establecida, forjando una colaboración. Un modelo que produjera plantación de iglesias saludables que apoyaran a la Asociación. Un modelo que demostrara la sostenibilidad y el crecimiento a largo plazo. Un modelo que permitiera la rápida expansión de la obra de Dios. Un modelo que generara investigación estadística para alentar a otras Asociaciones a participar en la plantación de iglesias que se ajustara a la cultura de la Iglesia Adventista.<sup>408</sup>

Evans también afirma que del año 2002 al 2010, se plantaron 114 nuevas iglesias en la Asociación de Texas, luego agrega:

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<sup>407</sup> Evans, Tom L. «Implementation of a Conference-Wide Church Planting Strategy within the Texas Conference», n.d. p. 8-9

<sup>408</sup> Evans, Tom L. «Implementation of a Conference-Wide Church Planting Strategy within the Texas Conference», n.d. p. 8-9



En el año 2010, se realizó un estudio de las iglesias plantadas desde el año 2002 hasta el 2006. La tasa de supervivencia fue del 87 por ciento. Esto supera el promedio de otras denominaciones, que es del 68 por ciento después de cuatro años. Las iglesias madres saludables y el entrenamiento constante y de calidad contribuyeron a la alta capacidad de supervivencia. En el 2009, las nuevas iglesias plantadas (excluyendo los grupos en desarrollo) produjeron \$ 3,669,548 en diezmos y bautizaron a 482 personas. *NCD International* llevó a cabo una extensa investigación en Alemania de las iglesias establecidas en comparación con las iglesias plantadas en la Asociación de Texas. Las iglesias establecidas obtuvieron un puntaje promedio acumulativo de 50.8, que está ligeramente por encima del promedio de 50, mientras que las iglesias plantadas obtuvieron un puntaje promedio acumulativo de 66.7. Un puntaje por encima de 65 coloca el nivel de salud en el 15 por ciento superior de todas las iglesias encuestadas en los Estados Unidos.

### **Iniciativa de la División Norte Americana de plantar mil iglesias**

Si bien *SEEDS* tiene un significado histórico, hoy existe un nuevo movimiento para la plantación de iglesias en la Iglesia Adventista de Norteamérica. Esta renovación se ve en múltiples iniciativas de entrenamiento y plantación de iglesias, oportunidades de capacitación, recursos y colaboración para la misión.

En el 2016, la División Norteamericana de los Adventistas del Séptimo Día lanzó *Plantar- 1000*, lo que describieron como una visión audaz y sin precedentes de colaboración en la plantación de iglesias. El dinámico José Cortés Jr. fue elegido para encabezar esa gran iniciativa. El programa se define en los siguientes términos:

La División Norteamericana, la Asociación General, las Asociaciones y las Uniones se unirán con nuestras iglesias locales e invertirán para ayudar a financiar 1000 iglesias comunitarias del año 2016 al 2020. Imagine plantar 200 iglesias comunitarias, cada año, durante los próximos cinco años. Hay muchos vecindarios, pueblos y condados en Norteamérica que aún no tienen acceso a las buenas nuevas de Jesús. Hay grupos de personas en nuestra División, que en su mayoría aún no han sido alcanzados. Estas nuevas iglesias comunitarias pondrán el evangelio a su alcance.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Nadadmin. «Church Plant Bootcamp». *NAD Church Plant 1000*. Modificado por última vez 17 enero 2019. <http://nadchurchplant.org/71-2/church-planters-boot-camp/>.

Como estrategia para completar esta tarea, la NAD brindaría apoyo y financiamiento sin precedentes a las Asociaciones que acepten el desafío. Los fondos reservados para apoyar la plantación de 200 iglesias comunitarias por año fueron \$ 10,000.00 por cada iglesia plantada, en colaboración con la Asociación General, las Uniones y Asociaciones (NAD \$2,500 / AG \$2,500 / Unión \$2,500 / Asociación \$2,500). El objetivo era que cada Asociación diera un paso de fe y plantara cuatro iglesias cada año durante los próximos cinco años.

El Departamento Ministerial de la NAD también creó el campamento de entrenamiento para plantadores de iglesias, una experiencia de equipamiento de primera línea de tres días exclusivamente para plantadores de iglesias, pastores, pastores laicos voluntarios, equipos centrales de plantación de iglesias (core team) y líderes de Asociaciones/Uniones que actualmente participan en la plantación de iglesias o planean plantar una iglesia entre el año 2016 y el 2020. Una visión similar ha sido concebida para el quinquenio 2020 - 2025.

El campamento incluye capacitación innovadora, evaluación, orientación y la colaboración con otros plantadores de iglesias en Norteamérica y el mundo. «Los beneficios de asistir incluyen enseñanza práctica sobre cómo plantar iglesias por parte de nuestros mejores plantadores de iglesias en Norteamérica, oportunidades de establecer contactos y aprendizaje empírico con otros practicantes que comparten la misma travesía, e información directa y detallada sobre iniciativas de financiamiento que puedan ayudar a

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los plantadores de iglesias a navegar los primeros años de una nueva congregación misionera».

Después del lanzamiento del programa *SEEDS* en 1996 y la iniciativa Plantar 1000 en 2016, los resultados son encantadores, pero aún pequeños en comparación con lo que deberían ser.

A diciembre de 2019, el Informe Estadístico del Secretario de la NAD reportaba cinco mil 621 iglesias y 880 grupos para un total de seis mil 501; anteriormente, a diciembre de 2015, había informado cinco mil 483 iglesias y 845 grupos para un total de seis mil 328.

Comparando el año 2015 con el 2019, la NAD evidencia un crecimiento neto de 173 iglesias y grupos, corroborando un incremento oficial de 2.66% en cinco años. Esto no incluye los grupos misioneros, que suman alrededor de 700 congregaciones más. En ese caso, el crecimiento sería de alrededor del 13%, lo que implica una tasa de multiplicación de 2.7 % por año. Podríamos decir con precisión que menos del 4 % de las iglesias NAD se están multiplicando.

### **La plantación de iglesias en la GNYC**

La Asociación ASD del Gran Nueva York se estableció el 1 de enero de 1902 para proclamar las buenas nuevas de salvación mediante la fe en Jesucristo. La institución fue organizada en respuesta al consejo profético de Elena G. de White, y está llamada a ser una Asociación que avance como una lámpara encendida. Al respecto, ella escribió:

«Mientras me encontraba en Nueva York durante el invierno de 1901, recibí luz acerca del trabajo que debía realizarse en esa gran ciudad. El curso que los hermanos debían seguir me fue mostrado noche tras noche. En la gran ciudad de Nueva York el

mensaje debe avanzar a manera de una lámpara que brilla. [...] Nueva York está listo para ser trabajado. En esa gran ciudad se dará el mensaje de la verdad con el poder de Dios».

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Elena G. de White también dijo que el Gran Nueva York debería ser un símbolo de la obra que el Señor desea ver en el mundo. Debo decir que la Asociación del Gran Nueva durante más de 118 años ha sido esa lámpara y ese símbolo. Sin embargo, una evaluación realizada en 2014 reveló que la Asociación había ido perdiendo uno de sus principales componentes misioneros: la visión de la multiplicación.

En ese momento, de los cinco Ministerios Étnicos que estructuran la Asociación, tres se detuvieron por completo en la visión de plantar nuevas iglesias, y solo dos se movían lentamente. El Ministerio Coreano, por ejemplo, había plantado su última iglesia en 1989. Tanto el Ministerio Inglés como el franco-haitiano habían plantado sus iglesias anteriores hacía más de diez años. Sólo los ministerios multiétnico e hispano crecían tímidamente.

Tengo que ser honesto y decir que durante los últimos años se habían realizado esfuerzos importantes para cambiar el panorama. Líderes, como Gerson Santos, hicieron grandes esfuerzos para promover eventos como *EXPONENTIAL*, el evento líder para plantadores de iglesias en Norteamérica, el cual ha hecho un trabajo invaluable en concientización, inspiración y capacitación.

### **El moderado movimiento de la GNYC - Proyecto 100**

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<sup>410</sup> Elena G. de White, *La evangelización de las ciudades*. (México: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2012) 149

El Poderoso Movimiento de la GNYC es una visión lanzada en el año 2015, inspirada en el libro de Apocalipsis 18: 1, donde está escrito: «Después de esto vi otro ángel que descendía del cielo con gran poder, y la tierra fue alumbrada con su gloria». Y también, la declaración hecha por Elena G. de White en 1910 que afirma:

«No hay cambio en los mensajes que Dios ha enviado en el pasado. La obra en las ciudades es la obra esencial para este tiempo. Cuando se trabajen las ciudades como Dios desea, el resultado será la puesta en operación de un poderoso movimiento cual nunca se ha visto».<sup>411</sup>

En otras palabras, el poderoso movimiento de la GNYC es una forma de evangelizar a Nueva York a través de la plantación de iglesias. La declaración de visión del programa es: *Cada discípulo haciendo un discípulo y cada iglesia plantando una iglesia.*

Para lograr un objetivo tan audaz, la GNYC debe apoyarse completamente en el Espíritu de Dios y hacer que la plantación de iglesias sea parte de la esencia (ADN). Los líderes deben inspirar a los empleados y voluntarios a aceptar la visión de plantación de Dios para ayudar a alcanzar a los perdidos. Las iglesias deben apoyar el plan de Dios de plantar nuevas iglesias, ya que el sacerdocio de todos los creyentes se vuelve a enfatizar al identificar, equipar y alentar a todos los miembros a comenzar nuevas congregaciones. Los pastores necesitarán ánimo y dirección. Y todo esto debe hacerse con oración, de manera estratégica e intencionalmente.

Las tres fases fundamentalmente son:

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<sup>411</sup> Elena G. de White, *El ministerio médico*. (Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2001) 404

- 2015 - Los primeros frutos que significan diez nuevas iglesias plantadas en 2015
- 2016 – 2023 - Es decir, 100 nuevas iglesias plantadas para 2023
- 2024 – En adelante - Una cultura de multiplicación

### **Eventos e iniciativas de plantación de iglesias**

#### **Cartografiar el Gran Nueva York**

En cada reunión, mostramos mapas de los cinco distritos de la ciudad de Nueva York: El Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn y Staten Island y Long Island y el norte del Estado con las ubicaciones de las iglesias adventistas marcadas con alfileres codificados por colores. Esto daba una referencia visual a los sitios y agrupaciones de nuestras iglesias para identificar nuevas áreas para la siembra.

#### **Primera reunión de discípulos e iniciadores de iglesias**

El 8 de noviembre de 2014, más de 350 personas asistieron a la primera reunión de discípulos y sembradores de iglesias celebrada en la Iglesia Bautista de Tesalónica en el Bronx. Los presentadores incluyeron al Dr. Gerson Santos, ex Director del Centro Urbano de Misión Global de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día mundial, y los plantadores de iglesias Kevin Sears y Steve Leddy. El Dr. G. Earl Knight, ex presidente de la Asociación del Gran Nueva York, pronunció el mensaje del mediodía, titulado «¡Vayan y hagan discípulos!» Los plantadores de iglesias dejaron el lugar inspirados y comprometidos a plantar iglesias y hacer discípulos.<sup>412</sup>

#### **Grito de guerra de la plantación de iglesias**

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<sup>412</sup> Este informe original de este primer evento fue escrito por el ex miembro asesor, hermano Leslie William

El 11 de marzo de 2016, en la Iglesia ASD Grand Concourse y el 12 de marzo en la primera Iglesia Bautista de Tesalónica en el sur del Bronx, más de 500 personas vinieron a aprender más sobre la visión de plantar 100 iglesias en la GNYC para el año 2020. Varios miembros del equipo de liderazgo ejecutivo que ofrecieron oraciones, elogios, palabras de aliento y exhortaciones. Los presentadores fueron del Instituto de Evangelismo de la División Norteamericana (NADEI). Un desfile de 'primicias' de 15 iglesias plantadas a partir de la 'Reunión de discípulos y plantadores de iglesias' de 2014 fue anunciado por el toque de trompeta de Dionisio Sosa. La música de Frank Valdez, Hope Montana y Kay Fray proporcionó un alto énfasis espiritual.

### **El festival de plantación de iglesias de la GNYC celebra 35 nuevas iglesias**

El sábado, 11 de marzo de 2017, *El Grito de Guerra Continuó* con casi 700 personas en la primera Iglesia Bautista de Tesalónica para celebrar las 35 nuevas plantaciones de iglesias y agradecer a Dios por su guía. El pastor Beras reconoció los esfuerzos de los multiétnicos, coreanos, ingleses, hispanos y franco-haitianos, en trabajar para promover el evangelio en Nueva York, reflejando el objetivo más amplio de la plantación de iglesias de la Asociación del Gran Nueva York como inculcar una cultura de discipulado, adoptando la visión: «Cada discípulo haciendo un discípulo y cada iglesia plantando una iglesia». Esta visión, creo, reflejó perfectamente el método de Cristo.

El festival también se celebró en el 2018 y 2019, con más de 700 asistentes. El festival de plantación de iglesias del 2020, programado para el 14 de marzo de 2020, fue cancelado debido al COVID-19.

### **Orientación y plantación del equipo de evaluación**

Usamos la estrategia de evaluación, orientación, capacitación y enviar (ACTS, Por sus siglas en inglés *Assessment, Coaching, Training, and Sending*) para equipar a los líderes laicos con la visión del Departamento de Ministerios Personales. La primera sesión de Orientación de Desarrollo de Liderazgo Espiritual se llevó a cabo el 23 de junio de 2015. La segunda se llevó a cabo el 24 y 25 de junio de 2015, y el 9 y 10 de noviembre de 2015 la tercera. Estas fueron planificadas para ayudar a los líderes a alcanzar su máximo potencial al equipar a otros. Gerson P. Santos completó el entrenamiento, Steve Leddy, Erlo Braun, Manuel Rosario, Greg & Bonnie Schaller, Rick McEdward, Anthony Wagener Smith y Samuel Peguero. Los participantes exploraron sus estilos de liderazgo, tipos de personalidad y diversos enfoques para orientar y entrenar a otros. Unos 30 pastores y líderes laicos completaron el programa.

Se llevó a cabo un retiro de evaluación y valoración del 13 al 15 de marzo de 2015, en el Campamento Berkshire, Wingdale, con 50 líderes de todos los ministerios étnicos, plantadores de iglesias y pastores. Para las evaluaciones de la vida espiritual utilizamos los cuestionarios: para ancianos y el APEST (apóstol, pastor, evangelista, pastor y maestro) basado en Efesios 4;. El principio es que los líderes espirituales fuertes pueden duplicarse y multiplicarse, creando iglesias saludables que luego pueden plantar otras nuevas en el continuo.

Más tarde, se desarrolló otro evento de evaluación en septiembre de 2016. Del 30 de marzo al 1 de abril de 2017, una delegación de 59 pastores y personas clave asistieron a la Cumbre de Plantación de Iglesias de la NAD patrocinada en Camp Kulaqua, Florida. Los participantes viajaron con todos los gastos pagos. Hemos nutrido intencionalmente



nuestras congregaciones existentes en toda la GNYC al equipar a los pastores para mejorar la salud de las iglesias actuales con seminarios y libros sobre la creación de iglesias adventistas del séptimo día saludables a través de su desarrollo natural.

### **Instituto del plantador de iglesias (IPI): intensivo de plantación de iglesias y el grupo maestro**

En el 2017 lanzamos IPI para brindar capacitación en profundidad sobre cómo iniciar y establecer nuevas iglesias influyentes. Este fue uno de los entrenamientos más detallados e intensivos en tiempo sobre la plantación de iglesias que se ofrecieron en esta asociación. Provisto para todos los miembros y pastores de nuestra asociación. Incluyó diez pasos para la edificación de iglesias nuevas y saludables del pastor Steve Leddy, que fomenta: una encuesta comunitaria, una evaluación de las necesidades y una observación cuidadosa para permanecer sensible a la población a la que se sirve.

El intensivo de plantación de iglesias es una versión condensada de la capacitación del IPI, para facilitar a quienes inician una nueva iglesia o tienen la intención de hacerlo en un período corto de tiempo. Su aspecto de portabilidad también es ideal para un amplio alcance en nuestra asociación. Del 25 al 27 de marzo de 2017, cerca de 30 líderes de más de diez nacionalidades completaron la primera capacitación.

El grupo maestro es un tipo de equipo de reflexión para la plantación de iglesias. Los líderes de la Asociación y pastores de varios ministerios aprenden nuevos enfoques y propósitos de la plantación de iglesias, explorando ideas para compartir en la capacitación y determinando las mejores formas de difundir y apoyar las metas del proyecto. .

### **Impacto externo de la plantación de iglesias**

Esta iniciativa ha servido de inspiración para una delegación visitante de la asociación del Gran Sydney, Australia y Corea del Sur. También ha generado invitaciones de la Asociación del Noreste de Estados Unidos, y del Sureste en la República Dominicana, la cual recientemente completó su proyecto de plantación de cien iglesias.

### **Visitas al campo de entrenamiento de plantadores de iglesias, intercambio de plantadores de iglesias y exponencial**

Desde que se lanzó el primer campo de entrenamiento para plantadores de iglesias en 2016, la GNYC ha sido la asociación líder en traer pastores y líderes laicos a la capacitación anual de Orlando, con un promedio de 50 asistentes en los últimos tres años. Los pastores también participaron en el intercambio de plantadores de iglesias y exponencial (EXPONENTIAL), la principal conferencia de plantación de iglesias a nivel mundial. Además, se entregaron miles de libros y estudios bíblicos para suplir a los plantadores de iglesias.

### **Resultado**

Según el departamento de Secretaría de la GNYC, a diciembre de 2015, teníamos 154 iglesias y 18 grupos que totalizaban 172; sin embargo, a diciembre de 2019, reportaron 160 iglesias y 33 grupos para un total de 193, es decir 21 más, refleja un aumento del 12.20% en cinco años ( $21 \times 100 / 172$ ). Esto no incluye los grupos de misión, que sumaban otros 30, para una tasa de multiplicación total del 29.65% ( $52 \times 100 / 172$ ) para el quinquenio y del ses por ciento anual. Gloria a Dios.

### **Algunas de las nuevas iglesias**

Por la gracia de Dios, hemos plantado más de cincuenta nuevas congregaciones, incluidas la Iglesia ASD Pelham Parkway Sp., Iglesia ASD NY Filipino, Iglesia ASD Bethel Sp.; Maranata Sp., Misericordia Sp., Manantial de Vida Sp., Mount Sinai Sp., Oasis de Esperanza Sp., La Paz Sp., Shirley Fr., Bronx Fr., Apocalypse Fr., MYGEN; Morningside Sp.; Bethany, Long Island Korean, Croton Falls, Luz y Esperanza Sp., 138th St. Sp., Gun Hill Sp., Throgs Neck, Living Waters, iglesia ASD Renacer Sp., Richmond Hill Southern Asian, Ambassadors, Park Hill Sp., Wappinger Sp., Hyde Park Sp., Arca de Salvación, Coop- City Sp., Light House, iglesia ASD Shekinah Bilingual, iglesia ASD Punjabi, iglesia ASD Queens International Filipino, iglesia ASD Canaán Sp., Antioche Fr, New Jerusalem Fr, entre muchas otras.

### **El desafío**

Nuestro desafío ahora como Asociación del Gran Nueva York es, en primer lugar, a partir de estas nuevas iglesias, consolidar la cultura de multiplicación deseada, convertir el proyecto piloto en un modelo real, sostenible, rentable, fácil de seguir y, en segundo lugar, motivar al 70% de nuestras iglesias que aún no participan en la plantación.

Debemos responder a estas tres preguntas: ¿Por qué plantar nuevas iglesias? ¿Cómo plantar estas iglesias y qué tipo deberían ser? Las respuestas breves son: Plantamos iglesias debido a: 1) El imperativo bíblico; 2) El mandato del Espíritu de Profecía; 3) La historia de nuestra denominación y 4) Nuestro destino profético.

En cuanto a cómo plantamos, estos son los pilares: 1) Mentalidad del Reino y orientado a la cosecha (estamos plantando a Jesús); 2) Liderazgo comprometido a largo plazo; 3) Plan estratégico claro y apoyo financiero; 4) Flexibilidad en los métodos y 5)

Sistema de apoyo integral (discipulado, orientación, instrucción, entrenamiento, predicación, lectura).

En cuanto a a qué tipo de iglesias plantar, estos pilares son esenciales: 1) Iglesias dirigidas por el Espíritu Santo 2); Con una mentalidad de multiplicación; 3) Impulsadas por los jóvenes; 4) Orientadas a la comunidad (relevantes) y 5) Portátiles y basadas en la tecnología.

## CAPÍTULO 5

### MODELO DE PLANTACIÓN DE IGLESIAS PORTABLES BASADO EN TECNOLOGÍA

#### Principios:

Jesús viene pronto y su iglesia en Nueva York debe hacer esfuerzos más significativos para cumplir con la Gran Comisión.

El componente de plantación de iglesias jugará un papel vital en el Fuerte Clamor profetizado en Apocalipsis 18. El adventismo comenzó como un movimiento de plantación de iglesias y necesitaba recuperar ese enfoque.

La plantación continua de nuevas congregaciones es la estrategia evangelística más productiva para el crecimiento del cuerpo de Cristo.

Cien iglesias son solo un paso más en la multiplicación de discípulos, líderes e iglesias en un esfuerzo por fomentar una «cultura de la multiplicación» que emule a la iglesia primitiva.

¡La iglesia es gente comprometida con la misión de Dios! No es un edificio, no es una organización religiosa, no es una institución eclesiástica, no es una denominación, sino el pueblo de Dios. Como declara Ralph More: «Las iglesias son puntos de cosecha».<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> See How to multiply your church by Ralph More

La salud de la iglesia se mide por su capacidad de enviar, no por su capacidad de asientos.<sup>414</sup>

Todas las iglesias son grandes ante los ojos de Dios siempre que cumplan con la Gran Comisión.

Los grupos pequeños y las unidades de discipulado de la Escuela Sabática son fundamentales en el proceso de plantación de iglesias.

NY es un símbolo, y Dios nos guiará a cumplir con nuestro privilegio. «No con ejército, ni con fuerza, sino con mi espíritu, ha dicho Jehová de los ejércitos».

Zacarías 4: 6

La intencionalidad conduce a la eficacia y la rendición de cuentas a la eficiencia.<sup>415</sup>

### **Fundamento bíblico**

Jesús se acercó y les habló diciendo: «Toda potestad me es dada en el cielo y en la tierra. Por tanto, id y haced discípulos a todas las naciones, bautizándolos en el nombre del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo, y enseñándoles que guarden todas las cosas que os he mandado. Y yo estoy con vosotros todos los días, hasta el fin del mundo». San Mateo 28: 18-20

Entonces dijo a sus discípulos: «A la verdad la mies es mucha, pero los obreros pocos. Rogad, pues, al Señor de la mies, que envíe obreros a su mies». San Mateo 9: 37-38

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<sup>414</sup> Rick Warren

<sup>415</sup> “Efficiency is doing the things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things” Peter Drucker

«Entonces las iglesias tenían paz por toda Judea, Galilea y Samaria; eran edificadas, andando en el temor del Señor, y se acrecentaban fortalecidas por el Espíritu Santo».

Hechos 9: 31

«Así que las iglesias eran animadas en la fe y aumentaban en número cada día».

Hechos 16: 5

«¿Cómo, pues, invocarán a aquel en el cual no han creído? ¿Y cómo creerán en aquel de quien no han oído? ¿Y cómo oirán sin haber quien les predique? ¿Y cómo predicarán si no son enviados? Como está escrito: “¡Cuán hermosos son los pies de los que anuncian la paz, de los que anuncian buenas nuevas!”» Romanos 10: 14-15

Sino, como está escrito: «Aquellos a quienes nunca les fue anunciado acerca de él, verán; y los que nunca han oído de él, entenderán». Romanos 15: 21

«Saludad a Priscila y a Aquila, mis colaboradores en Cristo Jesús, que expusieron su vida por mí, a los cuales no solo yo doy las gracias, sino también todas las iglesias de los gentiles. Saludad también a la iglesia que se reúne en su casa. Saludad a Epeneto, amado mío, que es el primer fruto de Acaya para Cristo». Romanos 16: 3-5

«Por esta causa te dejé en Creta, para que corrigieras lo deficiente y establecieras ancianos en cada ciudad, así como yo te mandé». Tito 1: 5

### **Fundamento del Espíritu de Profecía**

«Sobre todos los que creen, Dios ha colocado la responsabilidad de levantar iglesias». <sup>416</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Elena G. de White, *El ministerio médico*. (Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2001) 419.

«Debemos tratar, en todo lugar, de suscitar un grupo de creyentes que se una con nosotros en levantar el estandarte de la verdad, y en trabajar por los ricos y los pobres. Luego, a medida que se establezcan Iglesias, habrá un aumento de ayudantes para trabajar en pro de los indigentes y perdidos».<sup>417</sup>

«Pablo fue de país en país y de ciudad en ciudad predicando a Cristo y fundando iglesias. Donde podía encontrar oyentes, trabajaba para contrarrestar el error y dirigir por la senda recta las pisadas de hombres y mujeres. A los que por sus labores, en cualquier lugar, aceptaban a Cristo, los organizaba en iglesias. No importaba cuán poco numerosos fueran, lo hacía. Y Pablo no olvidó las iglesias que había fundado así. Por pequeñas que fueran, eran objeto de su cuidado y su interés».<sup>418</sup>

«Vi focos de luz que brillaban desde las ciudades y los pueblos, en las montañas y los llanos. La Palabra de Dios era obedecida, y como resultado, en cada ciudad y cada pueblo se levantaban monumentos a su Gloria. Su verdad era proclamada en todo el mundo».<sup>419</sup>

«No hemos de revolotear sobre las iglesias, sino avanzar hacia un nuevo territorio y elevar el estandarte en lugares donde el mensaje no haya sido proclamado».<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Elena G. de White, *Obreros evangélicos*. (Buenos Aires: Asociación Casa Publicadora Sudamericana, 1997) 451.

<sup>418</sup> Elena G. de White, *Historia de la redención*. (México: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2013.) 265-266.

<sup>419</sup> Elena G. de White, *Testimonios para la iglesia*, vol 9. (Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 1998) 24.

<sup>420</sup> Elena G. de White, *Manuscript Releases, Nos. 97-1179. Vol. 17* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1986) 124.



«Si los ministros se apartaran del camino, si avanzaran a nuevos campos, los miembros estarían obligados a asumir responsabilidades y sus capacidades aumentarían con el uso».<sup>421</sup>

### **Cinco metas estratégicas**

1. Inculcar la plantación de iglesias en el ADN de la GNYC como una estrategia de evangelismo vital. (Meta enfocada en los constituyentes).
2. Invitar a cada pastor y junta de iglesia a identificar grupos o áreas específicas no alcanzadas y comprometerse a plantar al menos una nueva iglesia dentro de los próximos cinco años. (Meta enfocada en los no alcanzados).
3. Desarrollar un equipo sólido de Plantadores Voluntarios de Iglesias (PVI) para apoyar a los pastores y al liderazgo de la GNYC. (Meta enfocada en el liderazgo).
4. Apoyar a los ministerios de la GNYC en el lanzamiento y la madurez de estos nuevos grupos misioneros a medida que crezcan hasta convertirse en grupos e iglesias que planten más iglesias. (Meta enfocada en el proceso de multiplicación).
5. Plantar iglesias que alcancen a las personas donde están, y que la iglesia virtual sea tan válida como la tradicional (presencial en el templo). (Meta enfocada en las iglesias en línea).

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<sup>421</sup> *Elena G. de White, Letter 56, 1901.*

## Desarrollo

### 1. Inculcar la plantación de iglesias en el ADN de los miembros de la GNYC mediante:

- Realizar un festival anual de plantación de iglesias.<sup>422</sup>
  - Proveer literaturas sobre plantación y crecimiento de iglesias.
  - Realizar un seguimiento inmediato con aquellos que decidan plantar una iglesia en cada conferencia o festival de plantación y en los entrenamientos.
- Reuniones campestres
  - Presentación de 30 a 45 minutos y testimonios en la sesión principal
  - Clases durante las reuniones campestres para proyectar la visión de la plantación de iglesias e identificar y equipar a los plantadores voluntarios de iglesias potenciales.
  - Motivar a los jóvenes a convertirse en plantadores de iglesias.
- Reuniones de obreros
  - Presentaciones de 15-30 minutos y breves y testimonios en todas las reuniones de pastores.
- Comité Estratégico y Comité Ejecutivo de Evangelismo
  - Recibir un informe sobre el progreso de esta meta de alcanzar 100 iglesias plantadas cada vez que se reúne el Comité Estratégico de Evangelismo y actualizar el Comité Ejecutivo según lo requiera la Administración.

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<sup>422</sup> El primero fue en noviembre de 2014, alrededor de 400 asistentes

- Agregar una pestaña al sitio web de la GNYC sobre la plantación de iglesias.
- Informar a toda la constituyente sobre el lanzamiento exitoso de cada nuevo proyecto de plantación y de todas aquellas que pasen al estado de iglesias organizadas.
- Mejorar el programa de entrenamiento y el programa de orientación para pastores y plantadores voluntarios de iglesias.
- Reforzar los programas de asesoramiento y evaluación.
  - Hacer uso de recursos como: el cuestionario para ancianos, el perfil de DISC (es una herramienta de evaluación del comportamiento) o los Tipos de personalidades de Myers & Briggs y APEST (por sus siglas en inglés Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, Teachers) basado en Efesios 4: 11 para evaluar a los plantadores de iglesias
  - Hacer uso de la plataforma *Mission InSite* para evaluar a la comunidad
  - Crear el equipo internacional de la GNYC de entrenadores y mentores de plantadores de iglesias.
- Invitar a cada ministerio étnico a reservar una cantidad específica de dinero para apoyar cada uno de sus proyectos de plantación de iglesias.
- Solicitar apoyo excepcional de la Unión del Atlántico, la División Norte Americana y la Asociación General para lograr este objetivo.
- Asociarse con el Departamento de Donaciones Planificadas para identificar y acceder a otras fuentes de fondos con el objetivo de llegar a las minorías en Nueva York a través de la plantación de iglesias.

- Asociarse con otros ministerios étnicos para acelerar la difusión de la visión.

**2. Invitar a cada pastor y junta de iglesia a identificar grupos o áreas específicas no alcanzadas y comprometerse a plantar al menos una nueva iglesia dentro de los próximos cinco años.**

- Enviar cartas a todos los pastores, ancianos y juntas de iglesia para explicar la visión.
- Visitar las iglesias principales y transmitir la visión en cada evento significativo de la GNYC.
- Utilizar herramientas de investigación demográfica para identificar ubicaciones potenciales para iniciar nuevas congregaciones.
- Identificar en el mapa del estado de Nueva York las iglesias de la GNYC y los lugares potenciales para comenzar una nueva congregación.
- Crear una presentación de diapositivas, video, folletos y materiales promocionales para que los pastores los usen en sus iglesias y proyectar la visión de la plantación de iglesias.
- Invitar a las iglesias que califiquen a establecer congregaciones bilingües y de segunda generación:
  - Trabajar con los diversos grupos lingüísticos en la GNYC para ver el potencial de establecer iglesias de segunda generación. El propósito será mantener a sus hijos y nietos comprometidos con la iglesia mientras valoran su herencia cultural.
- Identificar culturas a las que no hemos llegado en la GNYC

- Identificar recursos como periódicos, programas de radio, tiendas y restaurantes que sirvan y estén en el idioma de culturas a las que la GNYC no llega actualmente.
- Comunicarse con las iglesias, asociaciones, uniones y divisiones adventistas extranjeras para ver si tienen conexiones con los adventistas en la GNYC, a fin de crear nuevos puentes misioneros.
- Identificar intérpretes de las lenguas que queremos alcanzar
- Crear un sistema para capacitar a estos grupos sobre cómo llegar a sus comunidades.
- Establecer equipos de bienvenida para quienes inmigran o se mudan al área de la GNYC.
- Invitar a iglesias específicas a plantar o patrocinar una nueva iglesia en lugares específicos.
- Identificar a los miembros de la iglesia de la GNYC que son parte de culturas presentes en Nueva York pero aún no alcanzadas por la GNYC.

### **3. Desarrollar un equipo sólido de Plantadores Voluntarios de Iglesias (PVI) para apoyar a los pastores y al liderazgo de la GNYC en esta visión**

#### Plantadores Voluntarios de Iglesias

- Buscar 70 líderes y emprendedores en nuestras iglesias que apoyen la visión de la plantación de iglesias de la GNYC para ser capacitados como plantadores voluntarios de iglesias. Ellos deberían:
  - Tener un caminar saludable con Dios
  - Estar de acuerdo y vivir acordes con las doctrinas ASD

- Ser *influencers* en su grupo cultural
  - Tener habilidades de liderazgo
- Los PVI recibirán un reembolso por mes de hasta US \$ 400,00. Para calificar, deben:
  - Ser designados por el comité apropiado en la GNYC.
  - Mantener una relación sólida con Jesús
  - Cumplir con los requisitos bíblicos de los ancianos.
  - Apoyar todas las decisiones y directivas de la GNYC.
  - Ser el PVI de una congregación que cumpla con la definición de la GNYC de grupo misionero, un grupo, o iglesia.
  - Asistir a un retiro anual para los PVI.
  - Asistir a la conferencia anual SEEDS de la GNYC.
  - Reunirse regularmente con su pastor entrenador de la GNYC.
- Cada PVI debe haber plantado o participado en la plantación de la iglesia que él o ella dirige.
- Los PVI serán capacitados y firmarán un acuerdo de que la GNYC tiene autoridad sobre cualquier grupo o iglesias que ellos dirijan y puede hacer cambios de liderazgo en cualquier momento que lo consideren prudente.
- Ningún PVI dirigirá su iglesia por más de cinco años.
- Cada PVI debe comenzar una nueva congregación al menos cada cuatro años.
- El programa PVI no es una forma de obtener el estatus migratorio en los EE. UU.
- El programa de PVI no es una puerta trasera para buscar un empleo denominacional.

- Los PVI contarán con los recursos de libros, *blogs*, videos y otras herramientas para educarlos sobre la plantación de iglesias exitosas.
- Cada PVI debe tener un pastor mentor de la GNYC que se reúna en persona o por *Skype* o *Zoom* al menos una vez al mes.
- Cada PVI debe pasar por el proceso de evaluación de plantación de iglesias y tener un entrenador asignado durante al menos seis meses.
- Todo PVI debe ser estudiante graduado del Instituto Bíblico/Instituto Permanente de Capacitación Misionera (español).
  - La capacitación incluirá lectura y asignaciones, pero se centrará principalmente en la capacitación práctica en el trabajo.
  - Ejemplo: «¿Estás llamado a iniciar nuevas iglesias?» y «Equipando a los miembros de la iglesia para comenzar una nueva iglesia» y «Pasos para que su iglesia dé a luz a una nueva plantación de iglesias».
- Ningún PVI servirá como tesorero de la nueva iglesia o se involucrará en el manejo de dinero que pertenezca a los miembros, a la iglesia, o a la Asociación.
- El director de Ministerios Personales y Escuela Sabática y el presidente del Comité de Evangelismo Estratégico supervisarán el movimiento poderoso de la GNYC - Proyecto 100 y a los PVI.
- Dos pastores de la GNYC, uno del idioma inglés y un hispanohablante serán designados como asociados de plantación de iglesias para ayudar a ejecutar la visión.

Pastores plantadores de iglesias:

- Continuar la alianza estratégica con los ministerios étnicos para patrocinar financieramente a los pastores involucrados en la plantación para asistir a la conferencia *Exponential* y al intercambio de plantadores de iglesias en la Florida.
  - Proporcionar entrenamiento y orientación a los pastores de la GNYC que deseen plantar una nueva iglesia. Estas sesiones pueden ser en persona o por *Skype* o *Zoom*.
  - Ofrecer una capacitación anual sobre plantación de iglesias además del festival de plantación de iglesias.
  - Desarrollar cohortes de pastores plantando alrededor del mismo período de tiempo
  - Proporcionar a estos pastores libros, *blogs*, videos y otras herramientas para educarlos sobre la plantación de iglesias exitosa.
- 4. Apoyar a los ministerios de la GNYC en el lanzamiento y la madurez de estos nuevos grupos misioneros a medida que crezcan hasta convertirse en grupos e iglesias que planten más iglesias.**
- Inculcar la plantación de iglesias en el ADN de cada nuevo grupo misionero como un camino para crear una cultura de multiplicación.
  - Apoyar a cada grupo misionero para que se convierta en un grupo organizado (compañía) en dos años y en una iglesia en cuatro años.
  - Cada grupo de misión será evaluado con las herramientas de NCD (*Natural Church Development*) durante el primer año.
  - Los grupos misioneros deben ser respaldados por uno de los ministerios étnicos y votados por ADCOM.



- Se requiere un mínimo de 15 personas comprometidas para que un nuevo grupo misionero sea reconocido por la GNYC.
  - El ministerio correspondiente debe evaluar el equipo central del nuevo grupo misionero con el apoyo del Departamento de Ministerios Personales GNYC y el de Escuela Sabática.
  - Cada nuevo grupo misionero debe tener valores fundamentales y un plan de misión.
  - Cada nuevo grupo misionero debe usar grupos pequeños.
  - Cada nuevo grupo misionero debe tener una iglesia madre patrocinadora.
  - La evaluación, el entrenamiento y la orientación serán componentes críticos para establecer y hacer crecer estas iglesias.
- Debería elaborarse un directorio de todos nuestros grupos Misioneros y emplearse una estrategia para asegurar que reciban información pertinente y útil de forma regular de la Asociación.
  - Se sugiere que el Departamento de Tesorería refuerce los protocolos para diezmar y ofrendar en estas nuevas congregaciones.
  - Se prepararán los trámites y documentaciones necesarias para seguir a través de los ministerios étnicos el progreso de cada una de estas nuevas congregaciones.
- 5. Plantar iglesias que alcancen a las personas donde están, donde la reunión en línea sea tan válida como la tradicional.**
- Plantar intencionalmente iglesias que trabajen en plataformas digitales como Zoom y otras híbridas que integren ambos espacios (físico y virtual).
  - Asignar a cada adulto la tutoría digital de un joven.

- Establecer un departamento de asistencia digital (doras digital) para feligreses que puedan necesitar ayuda con esta nueva modalidad..
- Complementar la experiencia virtual con reuniones estratégicas en lugares públicos que no requieran costos extras ni alquiler.

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## Appendix D: APEST Assessment



### Manuel A. Rosario

#### APEST Assessment Introduction

APEST is a ministry assessment emerging from the most comprehensive statement of ministry structure, that of Ephesians 4:7,11-12. Within this passage we find the fivefold ministry of APEST: apostolic, prophetic, evangelist, shepherd and teacher; But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned It is he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be shepherd and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

All five ministries are needed to engender, call forth, and sustain a full ministry in the Jesus movement. In fact, all five ministries in dynamic relation to one another are absolutely essential to vigorous discipleship, healthy churches and growing movements. Ephesians 4:7,11-12 assigns APEST ministries to the entire church, not just leadership. All followers of Jesus are to be found somewhere in APEST, living out their nature characterized by a servant-inspired dynamic.

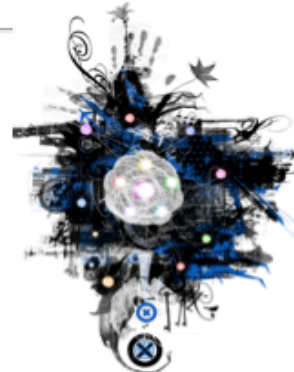
#### Understanding how your 'Primary', 'Secondary', and 'Supplementary' capacities work together

The APEST profile test helps you identify your 'primary/secondary' and 'supplementary' capacities. Think of these like your right and your left hand. Your 'primary' capacities will feature 2 of the APEST. We call this your APEST couplet. These two capacities work together in a special way. The first one is your paradigm or lens through which you see the world. These are usually the ideas that you are drawn to and motivate you. For many people this one is a surprise! Many people are also under-developed in this area, which is why we have created resources for you at [www.5Qcentral.com](http://www.5Qcentral.com) Your 'secondary' capacity is usually the voice through which you speak to others. This is how people hear you. It is also usually the language you receive the best – your love language if you will. Many people mistakenly think this is their main capacity. Read the description below to see how your two work together.

Your 'supplementary' capacities are not your main ones, but just like you are better with both hands, you are more like Jesus with some of all 5 capacities. Low-development in your 'supplementary' capacities will limit the strength and maturity of your 'primary/secondary' capacities. Read those descriptions and embrace opportunities

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## **Appendix E: Letter Dr. Olivo**

January 10, 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN  
REF. Dr. Manuel Rosario

Dear Sir/Madam.

A few weeks ago, Dr. Manuel Rosario called with a request to mentor him since he was writing his dissertation for the completion of the D. Min at your Institution and needed a special mentoring to complete his Ministerial Competency in Ecclesiastical Administration in the Context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I gladly accepted and set a date to begin a few sessions of private mentoring for him. Due to the situation, we are facing with the COVID-19 pandemic; the Mentoring was carried virtually through the ZOOM platform.

Three sessions took place of about 2 to 2 and half hours each. These Mentoring sessions all began with Prayer and immediately after praying we had informal conversations for few minutes about some general topics related to Ministry and then, we got involved into the Topic for the Mentoring as we had agreed.

*We covered a few topics related to Ecclesiastical Administration Listed below:*

## **1. SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF ECCLESIASTICAL ADMINISTRATION.**

It was clearly and explicitly exposed to Dr. Rosario, that though there exist general Principles for individuals who are responsible of the Administration of any Entity or any given Company, when we administer a Religious Organization, we have to do it upon the Principles of Spiritual Foundation in order to be a Successful Administrator.

The Spiritual Foundation for Church Administration was very well studied and reviewed for Manuel to be very acquainted and learn it. We based our Spiritual Foundation Study in the book of Exodus chapter 18 where we could clearly understand that the Spiritual Foundation for the Ecclesiastical Administrator was given by God to Moses through his Father-in-Law Jethro.

## **2. ETHICS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL ADMINISTRATOR.**

Dr. Rosario and I discussed how the Ecclesiastical Administrator should always be guided by a high Ethical standard. Generally, Administrators are asked to be guided by the general Ethic's laws, but as we saw closely how the Ecclesiastical Administrator should operate, we concluded that they should have higher ethical standards under which to conduct Himself/Herself.



### **3. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES.**

It is extremely necessary for the Ecclesiastical Administrator to know the use of Parliamentary in order to conduct meetings properly and effectively. Conducting meetings is an intricate part of the functioning of any Administrator. They must conduct several committees and if this is true in a secular setting, it is more on the ecclesiastical field.

Churches function through all kind of committees; therefore, it is the Ecclesiastical Administrators duty to learn how to conduct meetings by abiding the parliamentary procedures and make the meetings smooth.

Dr. Rosario, paid special attention to this fact and has been taking action to be very familiar with this aspect of being an Ecclesiastical Administrator.

Since this Mentoring is being done under the Context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which uses the Roberts Rule of Order to operate its meetings, Manuel has been getting acquainted with this book.

### **4. SEVENT-DAY ADVENTIST CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS AND POLICIES.**

As expressed above the context of this Ecclesiastical Administrative Mentoring was the Seventh-day Adventist Church Organization, therefore we reviewed the Constitution, Bylaws and Policy to make it relevant.

A very good review was done, and Dr. Rosario increase his knowledge of all the Documents related to it and the procedures the Church utilizes in order to accomplish its business.

### **5. CASE STUDIES.**

We use some case studies for each one of the topics reviewed and it made the Mentoring, Learning and Professional Growth easier for Dr. Rosario as well.

Respectfully submitted by,



Dr. Dionisio Olivo  
Vice-President  
Hispanic/Portuguese Ministries

**Brief details of credentials about Dr. Dionisio Olivo**

Dr. Dionisio Olivo has been serving the Lord in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for nearly 50 years in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and during the last forty years in the United States of America.

He has served in different capacities: He has been a local Church Pastor, Departmental Director, Ministerial Director and for the last twenty-five years in the Administration of the Church.

He served as President of the Greater New York Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for ten years and for the last fifteen years he has been serving as Vice-President of the Atlantic Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist, which is the Umbrella Organization overseeing the operation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in all the seven Northeast States – from New York to Vermont – and the Bermuda Islands.

## Appendix F: Letter Pr. Sandoval

January 13, 2021

New York Theological Seminary  
Rev. Dr. C. Vernon Mason  
Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program

Greetings in the Name which is above all name, Jesus Christ.

By this means, I inform you that I have been mentoring pastor Manuel Antonio Rosario Sánchez in his Ministerial Competency related to technology for the last six months. He asked me to serve in this capacity due to my expertise in applying technology to effective pastoral ministry.

We have been focusing on topics such as the creation of a YouTube channel and also different aspects of Multimedia and live-streaming. Since Rosario is developing a technology-based church planting multiplication model, we concurred that an extraordinary effort was necessary to buy appropriate equipment in terms of the sound, lighting, and the right software, which was also done.

The improvement of pastor Rosario has been outstanding in the last few months, and we praise the Lord for that. Thanks so much for the privilege to serve, and thanks for the leadership of the NYTS in urban ministry.

  
Grace and Peace,  
Pr. Tony Sandoval, MPM  
Senior SDA pastor at Central Church Hato Mayor, Dom. Rep.

## Appendix G: Flyers

**CHURCH PLANTING**  
On-line Training

**GNYC**


**NOV. 28, 2020**  
The Great Commission and Church Planting

**DEC. 05, 2020**  
Church Mission and the On-line Gathering

**DEC. 19, 2020**  
Historical Impact of Church Planting in the SDA Church. *Why, how, and what to plant?*

**SPECIAL PROGRAM**

How do living generations embrace spirituality and church attendance?


**INSTRUCTOR:**  
Dr. Manuel Rosario  
Personal Ministries Director of the GNYC

**SATURDAYS FROM**  
**3:00 - 5:00 PM**

Registration, please send an email to [mrosario@gnyc.org](mailto:mrosario@gnyc.org)

Upon registration, you will receive a copy of the book written by Dr. Rosario: *The Micro-church Movement: Planting the Gospel in Every Corner and the Cyberspace.*




**Entrenamiento de PLANTACIÓN DE IGLESIAS**

**En línea**


**28 NOV. 2020**  
La Gran Comisión y la Plantación de Iglesias

**05 DIC. 2020**  
La misión de la iglesia y los cultos en línea

**19 DIC. 2020**  
Impacto Histórico de la Plantación de Iglesias en la IASD. *Porqué, cómo y qué plantar?*

**16 ENE. 2021 - PROGRAMA ESPECIAL**

¿Cómo definen las distintas generaciones su espiritualidad y compromiso de asistencia a la iglesia?


**INSTRUCTOR:**  
Dr. Manuel Rosario  
Director de Ministerios Personales de la Asociación del Gran Nueva York

**HORARIO: SÁBADOS**  
**3:00 - 5:00 PM**  
Hora Estado Unidos

Para registrarse, envíe un correo electrónico a [mrosario@gnyc.org](mailto:mrosario@gnyc.org)

Al registrarse, recibirá una copia del libro escrito por el Dr. Rosario: *El movimiento de las Micro-iglesias: Sembrando el evangelio en cada esquina y en el ciberespacio.*






Un  
**zoom**  
de Esperanza  
para **New York**

Invito a todos los interesados en  
conocer más de **Jesús**,  
al interesante curso bíblico:  
El plan de Dios: Su mayor regalo.

**Domingos a las 6:00 PM | por ZOOM**

**Pr. Manuel Rosario**  
Instructor

**Inicio:**  
Domingo 9 de Agosto  
de 2020

**Para registrarse  
favor escribir a:**  
[mrosario@gnyc.org](mailto:mrosario@gnyc.org)  
📞 914.619.8385

Auspiciado por: Ministerios Personales y Ministerios Hispánicos de la GNYC

GREATER NEW YORK CONFERENCE  
of Seventh Day Adventists

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